MAURO AMBROSOLI, *Scienzati, contadini e proprietari. Botanica e agricoltura nell'Europa occidentale, 1350-1850,* (Turin, Einaudi, 1992), pp. 468 + 27 illustrations.

This is a work of great erudition with a large focus on European literature. The book centres on the cultural relations and the exchanges of knowledge about the principal fodder crops between Mediterranean countries and Great Britain during the high middle ages and modern times. Yet the study of farming practices and cultural loans is not confined within an intellectual sphere but broadens into socio-economic issues which are fundamental for an analysis of economic and international systems. For example, we can explain the real diffusion of a fodder crop such as alfalfa through the specific action of agricultural entrepreneurs or, on the basis of Schumpeter's classic distinction between invention and innovation, through the translation of agronomic theory into agricultural practice. Ambrosoli is quite at home with both the analysis of documents and the social history which is the final product, although a reader in a hurry might get weighed down by the excessive recourse to erudition and cultural references.

In this study of comparative history, Ambrosoli concentrates on three large areas: northern and central Italy, France (the Paris Basin and Provence) and Great Britain. Fundamental to the transfer of knowledge from one region to another and to their common technico-cultural heritage was the classical legacy which is presented with competence and mastering of the literary sources. For example, we can cite Ambrosoli's treatment of the fortunes of the Roman agronomist Aemiliano Palladio, firstly in the medieval period and later in Renaissance Britain. Again in the case of the well-known agronomist from Bologna, Pier de' Crescenzi, Ambrosoli rightly stresses his influence, at first parallel to Palladio for most of the fifteenth century, later for the originality of his teaching up to the mid-sixteenth century. Nonetheless, in the following centuries Pier de' Crescenzi's centrality diminished with the rise of European national agronomies which from then on were to draw on the basic classical tradition.

In his study of the practical application of classical teaching, Ambrosoli introduces a new instrument of analysis which differs from the methodological approach that is usually adopted in research on the influence of classical writers and specialists. Thus, he does not merely record the names of classical works kept in the private libraries of nobles and landowners but through a careful philological analysis of the manuscripts and printed works of the classical authors he notes the entrepreneurs' remarks, their underlinings, their individual choices regarding chapters and subjects and in this way he not only gains an indication of their interests but also of their future application.

Equally convincing is Ambrosoli's treatment of the role of fodder crops in France. While he confirms the traditional interpretation about the

diffusion of *sansfoin* and *luzerne* - which, however, did not match the potentiality of French agriculture - he stresses their development in botanical gardens, gardens and smaller properties, a trend which was to increase in the following period.

The fairly slow development of fodder crops and especially alfalfa is also illustrated in the case of the Po Valley, where the well-known Brescia School grew up, producing such agronomists such as Agostino Gallo and Camillo Tarello. Ambrosoli is somewhat reductive in his interpretation of the influence of their theories about the relationship between livestock farming and crop rotations, in contrast to Emilio Sereni's thesis. Ambrosoli's arguments about the limited impact of Tarello and Gallo's works on Venetian and Lombard farmers and entrepreneurs are convincing enough; less convincing is his tendency to scale down the innovative importance of Agostino Gallo's ideas about fodder crops and livestock farming and the relation between irrigation and the increase in agricultural production, So if Italy had the historical merit of rediscovering alfalfa in the sixteenth century after it had fallen into oblivion and into terminological confusion during the middle ages, through the conservativism of its ruling classes and agronomic entrepreneurs (exemplified in the case of the Bolognese Vincenzo Tanara), it lost a unique opportunity to lead the field of agricultural innovators in Europe.

Great Britain, on the other hand, seized on such an opportunity, exploiting the dissemination of agronomical knowledge which came from mediaeval and modern Italy and, in the mid-seventeenth century, from Flanders. Samuel Hartlib's Society, the writings of Richard Weston and Walter Blith, the crucial role played by Arthur Young and William Marshall in British agronomy in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries are all rightly stressed by Ambrosoli who is especially convincing when he emphasises the need to look at the progress of agronomy in Britain already in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and not just to concentrate on its impact in the eighteenth century, as both British and European historians have tended to do. Neither should we forget that progress depended upon a favourable social and economic context, as was the case in Britain. Yet we should also stress the fact that the conservatism of Italian landowners and agronomist needs to be considered in the light of an international framework which was not always favourable.

In his conclusion Ambrosoli remarks on decisions regarding general policy which may have been over-optimistic. Contemporary agriculture, with its standardised production and exorbitant use of chemical fertilisers seems to have forgotten the importance of clover, lupin and alfalfa which were so characteristic of European farming in early modern times.

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M.C. CACOPARDO - J.L. MORENO, *La familia italiana y meridional en la emigracion a la Argentina*, (Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane), 1994, p. 180.

The progress in research on migration has led to a greater focus on the role of the family with regard to the complex relations involving the emigrants' economic and demographic behaviour and family structure. In the case of Southern Italian emigration to Argentina, this aspect has been examined within a broader reconstruction of the origins of the emigrant community in the town of Rio de la Plata and of the characteristics of the Italian colony within that society.

With this collection of essays by Maria Cristina Cacopardo and José Luis Moreno, studies on the role of the family in Italian emigration to Argentina are enriched by a comparison of the behaviour of groups of emigrants and immigrants. The research carried out by the two Argentinian scholars based on new material held in Italian archives, analyses, on the one hand, the Italian communities settled in the industrial district of La Boca in Buenos Aires and the rural area of Lujan in the province of Buenos Aires, and, on the other three rural communities in South Italy which generated emigration to Argentina: San Gregorio Magno and San Gregorio Matese in Campania and Molfetta in Apulia.

In this respect, Cacopardo and Moreno carry forward the work already done on the subject by their insistence of the need for a regional study of migration and their formulation of the concept of the emigrants' 'outgoing baggage' - understood as the professional and personal experience which the Italians carried with them to Argentina - and conversely their 'return baggage'. Such concepts differed greatly according to where the emigrant came from in Italy and his destination in Argentina and they reveal the difficulty in establishing a single relation of complementarity between the emigrant's home region and his adopted region.[1]

With regard to Italian emigrant communities, in the introductory essay Cacopardo and Moreno define the characteristics of the Italian family in Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century, especially on the basis of data from the Argentinean population census of 1895. The first point they make concerns the difficulty Italian immigrants had in settling down in the new country, not so much on account of cultural or linguistic barriers but due to the fact that Argentinian society had already strong urban and industrial features by the end of the century. For the majority of Italian immigrants who came from rural areas which were often situated in the interior and were isolated, the arrival in towns where industry and the

[1] Cf. F.J. Devoto - G. Rosoli (eds), *L'Italia nella società argentina*, (Rome, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1988), and G. Rosoli (ed.), *Identità degli italiani in Argentina. Reti sociali, famiglia, lavoro*, with an introduction by L. De Rosa, (Rome, Edizioni Studium, 1993).

tertiary sector were so marked, such as Buenos Aires and Rosario, to name only two of the most popular destinations of emigrants, was tantamount to arriving in a completely unknown world. Moreover, even when they settled in rural areas, immigrants had to grapple with farming methods and implements which differed greatly from those they were used to in Italy.

Thus the establishment of new communities was conditioned by these constraints. Moreover, since there was always the risk of failing to find an occupation or of reaching a social and economic position which was little better than the one left behind in Italy - in short the risk of emigration failing - families tended to be organised around units whose priority objective was to save as much as possible and to start putting money aside. All these constraints tended to produce a high number of endogamic marriages, especially between men and women from the same community or region in the home country, and the practice of strong birth control.

The endogamic family was certainly the most suitable for adapting to the new society. On the one hand it minimised the psychological and social attrition caused by the impact with a completely new society, especially if the destination was an industrial area; on the other hand, it reinforced solidarity ties among compatriots. At the same time, birth control was dictated by factors like the availability of immigrant accommodation and services, the labour market's requirement of flexibility and the urban way of living. An alternative settlement pattern, like the one recorded widely in the rural area of Lujan, was that of households of young men living together who were waiting to save up enough money in order to return to Italy.

In this case immigrants stayed in Argentina for a period varying from three to eight years, often performing seasonal work which might involve frequent transfers between rural and urban areas. Often immigrants who returned to Italy after a few years belonged to extended family units which made the division of small family holdings unpracticable and obliged male children, both married and single, to migrate either temporarily - seasonal or short distance migration - or for longer periods - international or transoceanic migration as in the case of Argentina. It is interesting to note that the second case of migration was more common among Italian immigrants from the north of Italy.

At a more general level, the authors show that at the turn of the nineteenth century the characteristics of the Italian family structure varied throughout the country due to the different socio-cultural and economic conditions in each region, particularly with regard to the structure of landownership and the employment relations this determined. Emigration was certainly a common denominator in the history of the Italian family structure during this period but it should be stressed that within this process the differences in the emigrants' origins greatly affected its development both in the home community and in the creation of the immigrant

community. This is why even in the book's title it is necessary to specify the southern Italian family and to choose South Italy as the geographical area from which the three communities under study originated.

At the same time, within more general behaviour patterns regarding family structure in specific regions, emigration was defined by other factors such as the characteristics of family units, sex and age composition, social and occupational status, duration of migration, economic conditions in the home and adopted country, the tasks left to women who, at least in the early phase of migration, stayed behind in the home community. This last factor is given particularly attention in the book which examines changes in women's role within the family as a result of the disruption of relations between family members caused by emigration. From having a subordinate role women went on to take on a very active role both in the deciding phases of emigration and later in home affairs, the management of the family holding, child rearing and the administration of remittances.

For example, in the case of San Gregorio Magno, a community with around 5,000 inhabitants in 1861, situated in an outlying and mountainous region, M.C. Cacopardo describes an area characterised by a backward and extensive method of farming with cereals as the main crop, the prevalence of small scattered holdings, the majority of which were unable to sustain the family's self sufficiency, and very old customs and life-styles. As part of a much larger migration to South America, the small groups of migrants who left San Gregorio Magno for Argentina before the 1880s, appear to have left before the great mass of migrants, often in relation to demographic trends in the home region. Migrants were mostly agricultural labourers and peasants, above all young men who left without any other family members but also whole family units and men accompanied by sons or brothers or men who came back later in order to take their families with them.

Emigrants' remittances, an aspect of emigration tied to Italy's economic development at the end of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century[1], is the subject of the essay in which J.L. Moreno reconstructs migratory chains linking Molfetta in the province of Bari to three Argentinean localities - Concordia in the province of Entre Rios, Ingeniero White in the province of Bahia Blanca and Rosario – mainly on the basis of documents held in the *Archivio Storico del Banco di Napoli*. Following the agreement between the *Banco di Napoli* and the *Banco de Italia y Rio de la Plata* in 1902 the remittances belonging to Italian immigrants, which up till then had been sent home using uncertain and unsafe methods, could now arrive in Italy through normal credit operations: the savings of emigrants were deposited in branches of the Argentinian bank and could be withdrawn at branches of the Italian bank after about two months.

[1] On the role of remittances in Italian emigration cf. L. De Rosa, *Emigranti, capitali e banche (1896-1906)*, (Naples, Banco di Napoli, 1982).

Although it was similar to other communities which generated emigration as regards its social structure - based largely on day and seasonal labourers, agricultural workers, fishermen and seafarers, and small-holders - Molfetta differed from them in several ways: it was not a small centre, having a population of 25,000 in 1861; it was not isolated, being situated quite near to Bari, and having a small but active port: it was by no means lacking in economic resources for, apart from fishing and trade and handicrafts, oil for export was produced in the surrounding countryside and to a lesser extent, wine. Nonetheless, the increase in the population, which had been growing rapidly since the beginning of the nineteenth century and which by 1921 had exceeded 50,000 inhabitants, triggered off the migratory process. This was firstly an intra-regional movement and a migration to other areas in Italy but later, especially after the 1887 trade depression, it became increasingly trans-oceanic, with the United States as the main destination and, to a lesser degree, Argentina.

The period considered by Moreno, 1927-28, was particularly important. On the one hand Italy was undergoing a deflationary crisis; on the other hand the emigrant community from Molfetta had found sufficient employment in the local economy, having settled in three large port areas where the products of a rich agricultural hinterland and, in the case of Rosario, industrial products, were collected and shipped off to various markets. This led to the movement of a large quantity of savings which had been accumulated in the same period, that is from November to February when ports were at their busiest, but which were remitted at different times and in different quantities, according to the earning capacity of the emigrant and his relationship with his family back home. This depended on whether the emigrant was sending money back to his wife or his parents. In all cases, the role of women in administering the money from remittances emerges very clearly, although the variables in their behaviour have led the author to illustrate the most common situations with specific cases rather than to hazard generalisations.

A rather anomalous case is that studied by M.C. Cacopardo in the last essay concerning San Gregorio Matese, a small mountain community in the Campania Apennines. In this area sheep-farming, and, to a lesser degree, goat-farming, had been the main occupations but after Unification they entered a phase of rapid decline due to the division of grazing land in the *Tavoliere*, the crisis in the southern textile industry and the limited opportunities of expansion afforded to local agriculture. As a result a substantial proportion of the population was induced to emigrate. As early as 1869 there was a small colony of immigrants from San Gregorio Matese in Argentina, some time before the first migratory wave which is usually said to have begun in the 1880s and, in the specific case of the province in which San Gregorio Matese was situated, still later in the period 1895-1910.

The reason for this early migration is tied both to the nearness of the

port of Naples which was the main departure point for trans-oceanic crossings and to the migratory tradition of sheep farming communities. In addition, we should not forget the nearness to the industrial centre of Piedimonte Matese which presumably had some form of labour organisation and was therefore able to provide inhabitants with information about the job opportunities abroad.

Another peculiarity of the San Gregorio Matese case is the large number of women emigrants which probably depended on the fact that emigration here involved whole family units and groups. This was also reflected in the low percentage of return migration involving immigrants from the same area.

As the San Giorgio Matese case shows, the characteristics of the Italian community in Argentina should be studied by starting with the family unit in the home community and the network of social relations between the individual and his local environment. All these factors show that the individual's decision to emigrate was part of a family strategy involving complex interrelations between the home society and the adopted society. The choice of the family as the principal unit of analysis in the study by Cacopardo and Moreno helps us to understand better the process of migration from Italy as well as the structure of Argentinian society and, within it, the family.

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J.R. GILLIS - L.A. TILLY - D. LEVINE (eds.), *The European Experience of Declining Fertility. A Quiet Revolution (1850 - 1970)*, (Blackwell, Cambridge, Ma. and Oxford, UK, 1992), pp. XIV - 385.

The study of the decline in fertility in the population of Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is one of the most important meeting grounds for sociologists, demographic historians and economic historians. The fall in the birth rate which accompanied contemporary western societies' industrialisation and urbanisation is linked in most people's minds to a general idea about modernity, and is explained as such. However, from a scientific point of view, there has never been a comprehensive interpretation of the decline in fertility, partly because of the difficulties met with when trying to single out events to use as clear divides in time and space. The decline in fertility, on the contrary, constitutes a 'quiet revolution', which was not related to any particular war or a political crisis, but which affected the whole European continent at the same time and in a similar way from the 1870s onwards.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the French were the only people who practised birth control in the most modern sense of the term; elsewhere, only small groups of the aristocracy and the urban bourgeoisie began to reduce the size of their family. If we take a reduction of 10% in fertility as marking the beginning of definite birth control, we can see how this percentage was already reached in France between 1800 and 1830, whereas in most other European countries it was not reached until between 1870 and 1920.

The fact that a decline in birth rate can be seen more or less in the same period in different areas of Europe, in different countries and in different social classes, seems to suggest that there was a single process, if not a single cause. Yet the uniformity of the result overshadows the diversity and the complexity of the many local processes that combined to produce the overall effect. We can see a notable difference according to whether figures refer to large or small centres of population, i.e. to an area covering several nations, a country or a vast province as opposed to a city, a village or a single social group. In the former case, macro-economic factors, linked to structural changes in society, predominate in attempts to explain the decline in birth rate, whereas in the latter case we find diversity rather than uniformity; there is not one history of demographic phenomena, but many contemporaneous histories. Therefore the results of the processes in different geographical and socio-economic areas may be similar, but the ways by which these results were reached appear to be vastly different.

The book, edited by John R. Gillis, Louise A. Tilly and David Levine is one in a series of studies regarding social discontinuity edited by Charles Tilly. It aims at a unitary interpretation of the many demographical data found in the many small centres of population which can be used in research on the decline in the birth rate in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These three experts are internationally famous in the field of research on population trends, and have collected papers on this subject from researchers all over the world, who have all used very different methods. Particular attention has been given to a study group from the University of Princeton, led by Ansley Cole, which is researching the problems of the active population.

As the authors have emphasised in the Preface, preference has been given to the mechanisms responsible for the changes in fertility in terms of the diffusion of contraception. This process differed from place to place, was in constant evolution and was very much affected by the socio-economic conditions of the environment in which it took place. It is quite evident from the studies in the book that a reduction in fertility did not come about fortuitously, but was the consequence of a conscious choice, although naturally this does not mean that the practice of birth control was not subject to restraints; the class or social group the couple belonged to

and the relationship between the stronger and weaker element in the couple had a big influence on the timing and on methods of birth control. At the same time, the book emphasises the fact that voluntary contraception practiced on a large scale is not an indication that it was accepted without protest in that society; the debate about birth control has always been acrimonious and violent, both at a public and individual level.

Within this framework of a historical analysis of the decline in fertility in Europe which gives special attention to the role played by social and cultural phenomena, the contributions of the various authors in the book bring to light very different aspects of the problem. At the beginning of the book there is a survey by G. Alter of the past and present debate on the decline in fertility. The editors have divided the book into three sections. The first section is on the family and the different roles of men and women within it. The second section is about the importance of belonging to a group, a social class or a community in determining the choice of birth control for a couple. The third section is on the effects of population policies implemented by national governments.

The first section shows, in particular, how inadequate general notions about motherhood and fatherhood are in analysing the relationship between the formation of the family nucleus and the different attitudes of men and women towards it. As far as the role of the sexes in birth control is concerned, it is not at all an exaggeration to speak of the difference between a male culture of contraception and a female culture of contraception. Wally Saccombe observes that this difference was often synonymous with a subordination of the female role, and, in the title of her paper, she reminds us of husbands' 'rights' and wives' 'duties' in this field. Starting from a different stand-point, Mary Jo Maynes' research on France and Germany based on individual histories and the authobiographies of working-class men and women, suggests that memories of a childhood of plenty or of privation may have influenced the couple's choice to have more or fewer children.

Angus McLaren, in an essay on Great Britain, broadens the theme about the power ratio between the two sexes to include environmental conditioning. He shows that methods of birth control were profoundly influenced by the social class to which the couple who practised them belonged: middle-class preference for mechanical methods is interpreted as being an indication of the search for agreement between partners. Among the working classes, where the responsibility for the choice of birth control was the woman's alone, abortion remained the most widespread form of birth control, whereas the middle classes shunned abortion in that they deemed it immoral and dangerous for the woman's health. Still on the English population, John Gillis shows, with particular reference to the middle classes, that the changing role of women in society was a determinant factor in population growth. Ellen Ross emphasises the link

between the concept of motherhood and fertility in her paper on the behaviour of the working classes in London.

The second section shifts the analysis of fertility in the couple to larger groups. Leslie Page Moch's research on internal migration reveals uniformity between contraceptive methods adopted in rural areas and those adopted in urban areas. Similarly, Michael Hanagan's research, which compares an area in England and an area in France, shows that agricultural areas and industrial areas were not in such water-tight compartments as is generally believed, at least as far as fertility is concerned. On the other hand, Martine Segal's essay on Brittany, one of the regions least affected by industrialisation, shows that contraceptive culture varied from one place to another in the same area. Again, research carried out in Sicily by Peter and Jane Schneider shows that people in the same village practised birth control in very different ways according to their social class; birth control started amongst the village notables, followed by artisans and, only a very long time afterwards, by peasants.

As far as the role of the state is concerned, these essays confirm the view that population policies played a very minor role in the fertility trends: however, a government's choices might have interfered indirectly with the natural course of fertility. Jay M. Winter's essay shows that the most obvious case was when the population was at war which involved mass mobilisation. Similarly, the state performed an important action in this respect when it promoted cultural unification among the people of the same nation; Susan Cotts Watkins suggests that universal education (of the masses), the creation of a national media (the press, radio and television) and of national markets lessened inter-regional differences in contraception too. The relation between fertility rates and trends in the labour market, analysed here by Michael R. Haines, and between fertility rates and the creation of social legislation, studied by Lynn Hollen Lees, complete the picture of the relationship between state intervention and nation-making, on the one hand, and birth control on the other.

These essays show that the importance of national boundaries with regard to a differentiation in fertility rates increased at the turn of the last century, but that they should not be overemphasised. Similarly, the importance of the evaluation of costs and benefits of having children, should be reconsidered. In the past, this was widely considered when studying the practice of birth control, both within individual families and in the analysis of large groups of the population. Now, this assumption has been questioned by the discovery that the number of children may be influenced by the dominant image a society has of the ideal family. Thus, in her research on the population of Milan, Chiara Saraceno reveals that, in a culture that led to a division of responsibility between the sexes over contraception, the adoption of contraception was affected by the definition of the male's role and by ideas about the duties of a 'good husband'.

The book ends with an essay by David Levine on the analytical context the historian can provide for the study of topics connected to the decline in fertility. Levine's essay focuses mainly on the relationship between the value of individual experience and the need for general syntheses. Levine does not set out to provide a single answer to the problem, but he draws attention to the danger inherent in interpretations based on aggregating masses of data. This is a useful recommendation not only for those who study the past, but also for researchers who want to predict fertility trends in future societies through an analysis of individual choices.

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F. MANCONI, *Castigo de Dios: la grande peste barocca nella Sardegna di Filippo IV*, (Rome, Donzelli Editore, 1996), pp. 410.

Around the middle of the seventeenth century, the plague, an endemic disease which for centuries had periodically afflicted man, struck Europe once again and, in particular, Spain, where it very quickly spread into Italian regions with which Spain had relations.

The consequences were very grave: the disease always left indelible marks on people and things and, since it aroused terror, it caused instinct to prevail over reason and this made its effects all the more disastrous. In order to stamp out the disease, plague victims should have been isolated, whereas the disorderly exodus from the city and the sudden abandonment of the land were the most effective ways of enabling it to spread. The overriding thought was fear of death, from which people tried to escape by running away.

The fear was by no means unfounded: death was almost inevitable not just because plague's etiology was unknown and so it was never really treated (not surprisingly at the time the word plague was ascribed to any kind of endemic disease with high mortality rates) but also because death and exodus depopulated the countryside and led not just to food scarcity but outright famine which helped to undermine the population's bodily defences.

The 'black death', as contemporaries came to define the plague, had a big impact on the population level on account of the large number of victims and affected the economic cycle due to the notable reduction in production and trade. At the same time it distrupted social relations by indirectly bringing about a rise in the incidence of common crime and by exacerbating the conflict between rich and poor, between magistrates and the population and even between the latter and the aristocracy.

As is known, among the Italian regions to be visited by the scourge was Philip VI's Sardinia. This was hardly surprising since the island had very close trading and military relations with Spain. The book under review sets out to explain the causes of the disaster and evaluate its effects. It is divided into six very densely written chapters: "Storia e geografia della peste" (The History and Geography of the Plague); "I medici e la peste" (Doctors and the Plague); "La battaglia contro l'epidemia" (The Fight Against the Epidemic); "Una società in convulsione e ancora più ineguale" (A Society in Upheaval and Increasing Inequality); "La medicina della religione" (The Medicine of Religion); "L'impatto demografico ed economico" (The Demographic and Economic Effects). In them different facets of the Sardinian plague are carefully described and examined. This is undoubtedly an important contribution to furthering our knowledge about old issues concerning an island which is still considered 'difficult'.

The first chapter is introductory and looks into the classical assumption about the island being a 'pestilent' land on account of the frequent epidemics, especially malaria outbreaks which occurred there. Manconi sets out to trace the cause which triggered off the plague and to follow its 'geographical' course: in April 1652 a ship carrying a cargo of goods left Tarragona in Catalonia, that is from a port and region where "bubonic plague had broken out", without any checks at the departure and on arrival. This was the beginning of the disaster. The plague spread from Alghero eastwards toward Nulvi and toward the south from Oristano to Cagliari. Only the Gallura and Barbagia mountains prevented the disease from spreading any further.

Yet where the epidemic did break out and spread, it sunk deep roots. Why was this the case? The question immediately rises as to the relationship between the plague, doctors and medicine. Manconi addresses this issue in the second chapter, focusing, on the one hand, on the lack of professional training of the doctors who were totally incapable of dealing with the emergency and of providing suitable treatment, and, on the other, on the inadequacy and insufficiency of health facilities which could offer aid and relief to an increasing number of dying and infirm. The analysis of seventeenth-century medical theories shows the shortcomings in scientific knowledge about the subject with frequent and misconceived references to 'foul air', repeated and pathetic advice to beware of 'rotten' food, and the mental preconceptions which led people to seek supernatural causes and to see the disease as 'divine punishment' or, in the words of the title, the 'castigo de dios'. In other words, one looked to heaven above and not to the earth below with its rats, overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions.

Nonetheless, the disease had to be fought, and the ways this was done is the subject of the third chapter. Here Manconi deals with the special administrative and health bodies which were set up to deal with the

pestilence but whose only real intervention was to isolate victims by creating quarantine stations for the poor and confining rich people to their homes. However, the authorities also allowed people to flee towards places not yet contaminated by the disease, the worst possible remedy which, as we have already noted, enabled the disease to spread even more. The truth is that disorganisation, dictated partly by dismay, ruled supreme and Manconi documents this fact vividly.

The dismay was such that even religious faith failed to provide much solace, even though nobody renounced "the medicine of religion" (the title of the fifth chapter) nor the mediation of saints; the hope of divine intervention was widespread. It is understandable that men turned to religion in times of need and such behaviour should not be derided. The harm lay not in such instinctive reactions themselves but rather in the fact that indirectly they increased contagion: they hoped for intervention which had to be propitiated in churches packed with believers and during crowded, psalm-chanting processions, rested upon practices which brought healthy and sick people into contact with one another. Once again, the remedy proved to be worse than the ill it sought to cure.

As a result, people continued to die and the economy continued to slump. In this connection the need has arisen to give a fuller picture of events, to evaluate the effects of the plague on population trends on Sardinian society and its economy. This is what Manconi sets out to do in the fourth and sixth chapters which, from our own point of view appear to be the most interesting chapters in the book. As far as is possible we shall consider their contents.

On the plague and population trends, "all contemporary sources speak of the plague in the mid-seventeenth century as an enormous demographic catastrophe." On the plague and society, "the epidemic was a very successful leveller and at the same time a multiplier of social conflicts". On the plague and the economy, "scarcity of labour to work in the fields, scarcity of livestock and farm animals, trade reduced to a minimum, and the bankruptcy of royal estate and public finances." This is how Manconi begins his analysis, an analysis which he himself considers to be only the premise to a much broader work which should embrace careful studies of economic history.

The plague did, indeed, have a formidable impact on the population although it is difficult to quantify the exact number of deaths. We have no accurate figures either for the years following the epidemic or for the period just before the outbreak. As far as towns are concerned estimates are based on the number of households. Since they were drawn up for tax purposes they are hardly reliable for population estimates. The problem is that the families called upon to pay taxes did not always correspond to the actual number of families, given the many exemptions granted in the seventeenth century. Moreover, another important factor is that we have no precise

knowledge as to the number of people making up each household. More reliable, according to Manconi, are the parish registers; yet even these did not always reflect reality since they depended on the initiative of individual clergy who often recorded information relating only to people of high rank, neglecting others. We must also bear in mind the gaps in these registers due to the death of their compilers!

There are even more difficulties in trying to quantify the mortality rate in the countryside where there is an almost total lack of data. Moreover, as Manconi points out, the Sardinian countryside was affected by a substantial migratory movement, which the plague itself intensified, either because people sought to flee from the pestilence or because they wanted to move to areas with better economic prospects. Here we should remember that the decline in the Sardinian population was not only due to the plague epidemic, which, although a major factor, was only one of several other factors that had concurred to reduce the population. As Manconi observes, the region had already been "chronically empty for centuries".

Thus the plague had disastrous effects on a population which was already very small. What is worse, it hit the poorer classes much more vehemently that the wealthy ones. This happened not only when the disease was in its most acute phase but (apparently) when it started to abate. Manconi's conclusion is clearcut: the plague "widened the social divide between the privileged class and ordinary people". This was obviously due to differences in food, environmental and sanitary conditions. Those who were able to pay to leave or who could afford to stay confined to their homes, handing out large sums to doctors and to public officials for health permits authorising them to move to places not affected by the pestilence, were obviously much more able to combat the disaster. This had its own repercussions since the position of privileged groups exacerbated class tensions, especially when nobles and high prelates were assured a way of fleeing to plague-free regions. All this is carefully documented in the book.

Regarding the economy, Sardinia was a poor island which had to grapple with the financial problems affecting almost all the territories in the Spanish empire. The plague only made matters worse, since apart from new impositions as a result of the health emergency, there were still the 'higher needs' of the empire to meet and the contributions for funding its extremely costly war machine. And this was not all. Grain exports continued at fairly high levels under strong pressure from merchants who had no regard for the needs of the inhabitants, and this had an obvious effect on prices. In order to control inflation, which was threatening to get out of hand, the Viceroy government resorted to deflationary measures. These naturally undermined an already vulnerable economy.

Of course, while the epidemic lasted it would have been difficult to stimulate recovery, even with a different policy. Yet once it was over,

recovery could have taken place: the large exports of grain to foreign markets enriched merchants' pockets and raised their social status and in some cases provided capital for investing in agriculture. But the concentration of wealth, which the plague itself had made possible, did not produce the desired effects: the large number of papal legates which had been created during the dark period of the pestilence enriched, above all, the Church whose unproductive wealth grew disproportionately.

In conclusion, Manconi addresses the subject of the plague and its consequences in seventeenth-century Sardinia on the basis of extensive archival research, focussing on population, social and economic aspects. His study shows the advantages of adopting an interdisciplinary approach: in order to increase our understanding of the implications of any particular event - in this case, the plague - we need to widen our perspectives.

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A.E. MOYER, *Musica Scientia. Musical Scholarship in the Italian Renaissance*, (Ithaca-New York, Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. VII-325

In the field of research on scientific and mathematical activities, music is a subject which has been rather neglected but which has many aspects begging investigation.

In this book, Ann Moyer examines an aspect of Renaissance philosophy that for a long time has been ignored: the classification of knowledge into two categories, humanistic and mathematical, which has led to the modern distinction between arts and science.

The book begins with a clear and concise summary of ancient and medieval musical philosophy, and goes on to describe those factors that, at the end of the fifteenth century, led scholars and *musici pratici* (performing musicians) to raise new questions about the discipline of music and a musician's education. Pythagoras' teachings on music, handed down to the medieval world in Boethius' *De institutione arithmetica*, were of fundamental importance, together with new Renaissance thought on the arts and the disciplines.

Focus on learning related to the natural world was stimulated by a society which was undergoing a renewal of its own productive structures and in which the demand for new technical-operative instruments based on experience was greater.

Mental attitudes towards the 'mechanical arts' changed radically: the new *maestri d'arte*, who previously were on the same social level as

artisans, played a new role in society and in production. In a world characterised by an increasing demand for technical know-how, the formerly scorned title of *artifex* became a prestigious title and grounds for pride. The fact that the figure of the experimental *maestro* impressed people is evidence that a different concept of the intellectual was emerging.

In the Renaissance, an age of transition, the development of scientific knowledge and theory lagged behind that of technological development and production, which was intense even though the period was one of recession. In the seventeenth century this gap was bridged by the discovery of an abstract language, mathematics, based on the new development of practice. The process of 'construction' shed its medieval empirical nature and became one of planned, preventive calculation. Mathematics became the ideal expression of an objective rationality.

The disciplinary 'vocation' of mathematics meant that during the early Middle Ages (due to the theories of Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isiodorus and others) people tended to associate the name 'discipline' with the *quadrivium*, whereas the term *artes* was used for the *trivium* or for all the subjects taken as a whole.

The growing need for well-founded theoretical awareness - which marked the transition from 'mechanical arts' to real technical know-how, and to the science of technical know-how, technology - itself reflected an extremely 'scientific' attitude.

Since it was a practical demonstration of attempts to place everything on a human scale, the development of technical knowledge depended on the interests of certain classes, but this did not prevent it from having an important role in changing mental attitudes.

The codification of bourgeois experience was, in fact, a set of practical rules which was successful because it was profitable. Although there were some contradictions in it, this lay code was a crucial pre-condition for a new ethical-cultural system, and was to replace traditional knowledge with its immobilism, which was becoming increasingly useless because of its transcendental nature.

Moyer rapidly reviews the theoretical-musical production of the century which saw the beginning of the Reformation. She points out how two distinct lines of development may be identified, a humanistic one and a mathematical one.

The mathematical school grew out of the work of Italian theorists who were open to innovations in musical language. Zarlino led the field and counterpoint was the central theme of the debate. And so the ground was fertile for the production of theoretical texts by means of which the 'practical' musician could easily bring himself up-to-date on counterpoint, singing and instrumental practice. Many of the treatises Moyer quotes were to a greater or lesser extent about rhetorical-mathematical questions, but

she warns the reader that she concentrates her attention on works entirely about musical rhetoric.

The treating of questions such as temperament and intonation, linked either directly or indirectly with the use of the diapason, is also very interesting.

Zarlino's division into history and method began to yield results with the work of Galileo and Bottrigari. At this point, the study of sound as a vibratory movement developed parallel to the study of mechanics, which had a very different historical development.

Incessant arguments about minor details of the tonal systems (tuning) characterised the first half of the sixteenth century. Boethian tradition, however, had not focused attention only on the diapason, and new sources presented new orders of numbers and names for the tuning system. Scholars soon saw the contradiction in the information from ancient sources and new sources. But they failed to recognise the cause of this contradiction.

The sixteenth century was the century of 'double truths', of 'double morals': the need for order set the immobile 'truths' of the old cultural system against the intuitions and the conquests of the intellect, and set a rigid teaching by precepts (which ruling groups avoided in their practical conduct) against the realistic assumptions behind new ethics. The Counter-Reformation sanctioned such a distortion in cultural developments in this period by institutionalising the separation of knowledge.

The unity of 'professional' intellectuals who earned their living by working independently, and the new relationship with power - in substance, the main features of the Renaissance - grew out of this very context, precarious though it was, and on the contradiction between the expansive potentiality of the ethical and intellectual values of an educated bourgeoisie and the levels of economic production and political organisation which *de facto* hindered their development.

Moyer also refers to the changes in ideas and to the maturity acquired by those who performed ancient music.

In the past there has been a minority group of enterprising musicians who have used ancient music in improbable parodies of musical performances of the past. Over the years, the majority of performers have totally forgotten initial 'fetishisms', in favour of an approach based on retrieving instruments, techniques and performing conditions of the past, but without the impossible aim of recreating an ancient performance.

It is not a question of merely reconstructing scenes and situations of the time, nor of using ancient instruments in a performance but of thinking of ancient music with a different theoretical and cultural approach. Music as a discipline in the Renaissance had different values from modern-day values. And so to understand it fully, we should recall the Renaissance concept of *ars*, and, above all, of unitary science; it is not enough to mention the division into arts of the *trivium* and of the *quadrivium!*

The artist's response to a demand for music from people whose culture dwells on the myths of the past is increasingly a compromise. Musical theory and its origins, central to many aspects of Renaissance thought, have been difficult to integrate into modern culture. This is why Moyer rightly maintains that the Renaissance must be understood in terms of other contemporary fields of knowledge.

The book is divided into five chapters with an introduction and a conclusion that reveal the objective difficulties the author met with in establishing a connection between theoretical sources and 'practical' musical activity. There were three reasons for this: 1) the difficulty in indicating and classifying the contexts and the way of performing; 2) the scarce indications about how to perform the music in the manuscripts and the treatises which have come down to us; 3) last but not least, on the part of performers and the public, the relative lack of interest in the 'historical' revival of such music.

Ann E. Moyer's book begs for new thought on the subject. In terms of method and aims, we ought to distinguish between the history of music as the reconstruction of links between contemporary and later musical structures, and the history of music in a much broader context in which music is (sometimes indirectly) related to wider events. These 'indirect' histories of music are the most successful and the most frequent, and the book we are reviewing is a significant example. The time is now ripe for a radical change in the way of writing the history of music and for acknowledging that disciplines like mathematics, geometry, natural sciences, psychology and research on musical sources and musical analysis can add to research and to the renewal of historiographical musical method.

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K. NOVOTNY, *Severočeští tiskaři kartounu v první polovině 19. století.* (The Calico Printers of Northern Bohemia in the First Half of the XIXth Century), (Praha, Karolinum, 1993), pp. 240.

The author, who has taught modern history at Charles University in Prague for four decades, is one of the outstanding specialists on the economy and labour movement of Central Europe during the early stages of the industrial revolution. He has published several books as well as numerous articles dealing with the beginnings of the textile and glass industries in Bohemia, and the origins of the labour movement during the pre-socialist period. Novotný's analyses which draw mainly on original

previously unpublished documents have produced detailed accounts and many interesting conclusions. The importance of his research is amplified by the fact that Bohemia was one of the countries in the cradle of the modern Central European economy. More than half of all industrial production of the Habsburg Monarchy originated in the Czech Lands. Novotný's early works focused on the organization and structure of the first industrial enterprises. His arguments restated the contention that, even though the majority of industrial workers in the Czech Lands were serfs (until 1789), their work in factories, manufacturing and crafts was performed, for the most part, freely and separately from their *robota* duties (which were minimal for the landless poor). An overwhelming majority of the industrial labour force in the eighteenth century worked in various forms of the putting-out system in the textile industry.

The book under review is a fascinating account of the early labour movement in Bohemia during the time when it was led by associations of calico-printers in Prague and Česká Lípa. Four thousand of these workers were (together with typographers and probably also with skilled miners) among the best paid of workers in Bohemia. (Their earnings were ten times greater than those of the unskilled workers.) In 1844-1845 the calico printers considered the struggle for the banning of printing machines (the *perotins*) in textile factories to be the main purpose of their organizations. However, the activities of their associations were far from being limited to the politics of a class struggle. For decades their efforts were concentrated on various aspects of social security for workers. The association provided financial assistance to the unemployed, sick, old, disabled, and also orphans and widows. Usually, the benefits were huge. At the time, the compensation for unskilled workers in Bohemia averaged 1 gulden a week. In contrast every member of the association who became sick could receive 10 *gulden* a month as health benefit for a period of four months and 6 *gulden* thereafter for an unlimited time. The old and disabled received 2 *gulden* a week. The programme was funded by mandatory contributions from healthy members. The system provided workers not only with health and social security benefits but also helped them to keep their savings. Every year the associations distributed all unused funds to the members. The most intriguing feature of the calico-printers'associations was their international character. Although the majority of members were local workers, a significant number also came from Germany, Switzerland, Poland, and some even from England and the Netherlands. All members of a local branch were entitled to the benefits mentioned regardless of their national origin. Moreover, wandering association members of any nationality were provided with food and accommodation for a one-day and one-night stay at the expense of the branch they visited. Since the association functioned in a large area of Central Europe, Switzerland, Alsace, its members could find support over a relatively wide area. The calico-printers also tried to use their

organization for the coordination of their labour demands. The author was able to trace an interesting attempt by Prague workers to gain direct support for their demands to ban the printing machines from colleagues in Northern Bohemia. An attempt to spread the struggle ended in a bloody clash in Česká Lípa. The Bohemian printers were well informed about the demands of their counterparts in Germany, but concrete international cooperation in labour struggles is difficult to prove.

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R.C. RICHARDSON (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the English Revolution*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press), 1992, pp. IX-278.

While in the course of the seventeenth century Europe underwent a process of restructuring which brought about a definitive split into two regions, an industrial and capitalist region in the north-west, an agricultural and feudal region in the Mediterranean, Britain was the stage of a bloody war in the 1640s and 1650s which greatly damaged the country's economic and social fabric. Yet despite the violent nature of the political conflict which had devastating consequences for entire counties, the English Revolution did not bring about the profound, epoch-making changes that were wrought on the structure of European society by the French Revolution in the eighteenth century and the Russian Revolution in the twentieth. The economy was seriously damaged but its basic features were not modified. The final outcome of the Civil War was the modernising transformation of the Monarchy and the consolidation of market forces which were to steer the British industrial take-off in the subsequent century and to secure the country its world primacy.

This is the basic theme which runs through the ten essays in this book on the town and the countryside in the English Revolution edited by R.C. Richardson. The essays analyse different aspects of the Civil War and cover a wide range of issues very comprehensively. The thesis proposed by the editor and expounded in the book's opening essay hinges on a question which is dealt by all the authors in varying degrees: the interrelationship between urban and rural situations.

A historiographical vacuum separates town and the countryside on the English Revolution. Tawney and Trevor-Roper, Holmes and Howell are only a few historians who, in the course of this century, have analysed the two terms separately.

Yet in Britain there was no town /country divide comparable to that which characterised eighteenth-century France and which according to

eminent scholars such as Michelet and Cobban was one of the underlying causes of the French Revolution. Indeed, town and country were closely intertwined in seventeenth-century Britain. There were frequent migrations from the countryside to the towns (in a town like Canterbury only 10% of the inhabitants had been born there); many town occupations were tied to the countryside (bakers, butchers, brewers and tanners); as a result of the expansion of town markets farmers depended increasingly on urban consumers; many industries were situated in the country and lastly merchants and tradesmen invested increasing sums in land.

As regards the history of social classes and the political views of the upper classes, Barry Coward's essay is significant and shows the ambiguity of the gentry's role in the Revolution and their lack of unity. While some members of the gentry gave their support to the Republic (both under the Commonwealth in 1649-53 and under the Protectorship in 1653-59) in the winter of 1659-60 many of them supported the Monarchy again, and were later to become Tories.

Ann Hughes makes a case study of Coventry and examines the tensions between the city administration and the Warwickshire gentry. The essay also analyses the friction between producers of raw materials and cloth manufacturers and the conflict over the use of common lands. According to Hughes the effect of the war was to reshape the town's relationship with the surrounding countryside and its gentry. Yet although Coventry proved to be extremely loyal to the Puritan and Parliamentary cause throughout the Civil War, the position of many other towns caught in the Revolution was far less clear-cut. Keith Lindley shows in his essay on London that the traditional unity among districts, parishes and guilds which was threatened by radical policies, paved the way to the Restoration in the 1660s, confirming the city's time-honoured conservatism. Again David Scott shows that in York the heavily ideological nature of the political struggle and especially of the Parliamentary/Puritan faction ensured the pragmatic acceptance of a return to the *status quo*.

Within this context of complex political alliances, the war caused profound economic damage. The textile industry collapsed as a result of production and distribution problems. Long-distance trade and credit were similarly hit. The West Country and the Welsh clothmakers fought in vain to transport goods across the war zones to London.

But the worst hit were the towns which were most closely-linked to the countryside. This was the case of Oxford, described in Ian Roy's essay. The seat of a prestigious university, Oxford was first and foremost a market for agricultural and industrial goods like beer, bread, textiles (especially gloves) with traders and businessmen who were themselves the owners of land and farms in the country. The town suffered as a result of the fall in population, the destruction of landed property and industrial buildings, the distruption of trade and general financial hardship.

In the countryside nearest to the areas of combat and crossed over by the rival armies, the Revolution meant a loss of live-stock, the destruction of crops and agricultural implements with acts of vandalism and horse thefts. The essays by C.B. Phillips and Joan Thirsk deal with the effects of war on the countryside. While Phillips dwells on the landlord-tenant conflict which revolved around the issue of rents and their reduction, Thirsk makes a broad analysis of the agrarian structure and the policies adopted to reform them during the two decades. Both essays stress the effects of the sudden availiability of large quantities of confiscated land for sale as a result of measures adopted by Parliament and the government. In November 1646 land belonging to the cathedrals and the chapters was sold, in 1649 the Crown lands and in 1651-52, the land belonging to the Royalists who refused to conform. Tenants who had acted as a pressure group benefited from the measures and seized the opportunity to purchase land, as did members of the gentry, merchants and soldiers who had returned to civilian life.

According to Buchanan Sharp, apart from the division between Royalists and Parliamentarians, the result of the civil war was a profound change in the countryside's social structure: the victory of the gentry and the 'middle classes', above all the yeomen and husbandmen, who continued to expand, and on the other hand, small-holders, artisans, the poor and landless labourers who increased in numbers and whose conditions worsened, especially in the areas where enclosure and deforestation reduced access to common land. In the Forest of Arden, for example, the number of poor landless people rose tenfold from 1570 to 1660.

David Harris Sacks considers the relationship between religion and politics, ideology and economic policy in a very good essay in which he reconstructs the conflict between two ideological positions in Bristol: that of the Society of Merchant Venturers, based on a moderate Calvinism which exalted the virtues of occupations linked to the market and profit, such as merchants, *condottieri* and big traders, and the other embraced by smaller tradesmen, artisans and retailers based on a deep commitment to the ideals of social solidarity and government by sovereigns who worked for the good of the whole community. The two ideological and religious positions reflected differences in ideas about the economy, the first one favouring monopoly, the second one free trade. While the Society of Merchant Venturers wished to receive privileges and exemptions and therefore recognised royal authority and were allied to the Monarchy, the free-traders sided with the Parliamentarians.

This book is an important chapter in the history of European Revolutions. The various essays successfully cover different areas of study which nonetheless overlap and are interlinked. The languages of economic history and social history are carefully blended in an analysis that takes account of the contexts in which political events and macro-economic

processes occur. In this way the book attempts to unravel the complex ties between religious spirit, ideologies and economic ideas which marked the rise of Great Britain as a major industrial and colonial power.

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