R. FOGEL, *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America and the Third World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004.

Economist and Nobel laureate Professor Robert Fogel turns his considerable talents to the issues of health, nutrition and technology in this volume, part of a series exploring Population, Economy and Society in Past Time from Cambridge University Press. The book is based on a series of his own lectures delivered in Cambridge, which drew on recent research that has revealed much about the history of populations in 'now-developed' societies. It is this research that enables Fogel to speculate convincingly on the various mechanisms linking nutrition to the rise of civilization and the possible future of health care and technology in both developed and developing countries.

The book is clearly written as a guide for the lay-person, as it discusses the various issues in a concise and accessible style. There is also the addition of a glossary of terms at the end to provide further assistance for the uninitiated. This style is appropriate in a text that employs a multidisciplinary approach to the understanding of some still-controversial issues relating to the links between body size, longevity and technology – what Fogel terms "technophysio evolution". The book touches only briefly on some of these issues, but as an introduction to the author's often far-reaching theories concerning our past and future it is a fascinating read.

There are five interrelated chapters outlining various concepts and areas of debate, beginning with an introduction to the research which has made such debates possible. The first chapter describes conditions in Europe and America prior to the rapid increases in body size and life expectancy seen in the twentieth century. Fogel recounts how data on mortality, food availability and body proportions were traced back to the eighteenth century in order to demonstrate how nutrition is linked to body size and health.

The second chapter deals in more detail with the concept of "technophysio evolution", described as an interaction between technology and physiology. Fogel believes that this has become more important than genetic evolution in predicting future trends in health, since it has progressed so quickly throughout the twentieth century. Support for this theory is offered in the novel guise of using thermodynamics to explain how caloric energy used in

agricultural work must be exceeded by the number of calories produced in food in order for civilisations to develop. This is then linked with body size through the explanation that body size is restricted by inadequate nutrition, and that larger bodies work more efficiently. Following logical steps, Fogel next presents evidence that body size is linked to morbidity and mortality, potentially through early life experiences. He thus draws upon topical ideas from the realms of epidemiology, economics and demographic history to advance a coherent argument. Finally, Fogel bolsters this argument using historical evidence indicating that his biomedical markers such as height and life expectancy may act as more accurate indicators of economic status than the official economic measures of the time, particularly when inequalities are taken into account. The question of inequality is discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

Chapter three, meanwhile, extrapolates the information already given about historical conditions in developed countries to provide possible practical applications for modern-day developing countries. This chapter largely deals with the debate concerning the accuracy or otherwise of estimates of the current degree of malnutrition in developing countries. This is a contentious issue, but Fogel argues persuasively against the "small but healthy" interpretation and asserts that both body size and longevity may yet increase further even in the most developed countries, thus indicating that current targets for increasing these characteristics in developing countries may be somewhat meaningless.

The fourth chapter follows on from this discussion by speculating on the future of health-care spending and demand. At this point Fogel expounds in more detail on the economic basis for his argument and describes several predictive models by which health-care spending, rather than being controlled in the manner favoured by most Western governments, could be developed as a growth industry paid for largely by consumers through a compulsory savings system. Fogel examines a vision of the future in which the prime assets, rather than being consumables, are health and leisure time to be devoted to self-realisation. This is an interesting trend that is already beginning to be observed.

The field of enquiry is thus narrowed to specifics in the final chapter, in which Fogel examines the inequalities remaining in developed societies and

methods of balancing these with regard to delivering basic health care for all. This argument appears to have its basis in the current US system of health care, but incorporating additional services focusing on prenatal and postnatal care, health education, health screening in schools and the introduction of health clinics for the poor. Fogel thus completes what has been largely a macro-level discussion of the relationships between physiological, technological and social factors with some very specific recommendations.

I found this book extremely informative in its discussion of a range of issues all relating to health and nutrition, and the author's arguments are persuasive. Many of Fogel's conclusions drawn from past health data were encouraging, although a small criticism might be that he paints too optimistic a picture of health care as a growth industry in a society of people searching for self-realisation. It seems equally likely that the future of developed countries may involve societies increasingly tranquilised by the mass media and consumption, in which the poor have ever-diminishing access to health care.

In addition, the future models described are all very consumer-based, and take little account of possible changes in the structure of societies caused by political or environmental changes. Fogel mentions frequently the social class inequalities acting as a barrier to access to health care for all, but does not deal with the changes in the structure of social classes between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries which may also have an impact on health behaviours and attitudes to health care. As Fogel himself has shown in numerous examples, there is a limit to how far the past can predict the future.

However, these are small doubts raised by what is overall a fascinating and thought-provoking read. This book would be valuable background reading for those interested in the disciplines of demographic history, economics, sociology and cultural studies of epidemiology and health policy. Professor Fogel is undoubtedly an imaginative and knowledgeable observer of historical trends and predictor of future ones, and interested parties will be delighted that he has turned his keen gaze on the fascinating relationships between food, health and technology.

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B.J. García García and A. Álvarez Ossorio (eds.), *La Monarquía de las naciones: patria, nación y naturaleza en la Monarquía de España*. Fundación Carlos de Amberes, Madrid, 2005, pp. 861.

During the last decades there has been a visible increase in the interest in the study of the problems faced by multinational political organisations and states. As may be seen in the most recent developments in the process of European integration, marked by the cyclical sequence of periods of advances and setbacks, the evolution of this kind of organisation is governed by the permanent need to combine the highest levels of political integration with respect for all kinds of local peculiarities. Far from being something new, this has been the same problem faced by other multinational states and empires in the past, so it is not surprising to see that scholars and politicians tend to seek solutions to today's problems in the history of the nineteenth-century Habsburg Empire or in the Soviet Union.

The Spanish monarchy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be deservedly considered as one of the best examples of a multinational empire. One of the leading superpowers of its age, the reasons for the Spanish monarchy's crisis and decline have long attracted the interest of historians and researchers. However, there are nevertheless good reasons for re-examining the Spanish monarchy, emphasising its successes rather than its failures. After all, the Spanish monarchy held on to its territories until the arrival of the Bourbon dynasty in the early eighteenth century, and even then the monarchy managed to conserve its rich American possessions. Therefore, at least from a purely political point of view, the empire achieved better results than is traditionally believed. This book clarifies some of the reasons for this success.

The book, edited by B. J. García García and A. Álvarez Ossorio, consists of the papers from the IVth International History Seminar on *"La Monarquía de las Naciones. La Monarquía de España, un espacio plurinacional"*, which aim to show how the Spanish monarchy was able to bring together the different lands, nations and political cultures of the monarchy to form a relatively efficient and stable political organization.

After reading the book it seems evident that two opposite trends may be seen in the Spanish Empire. Firstly, the articles of X.Gil Pujol, T. Herzog, J. Donézar, Y. Guerrero, A. Flores and X. Torres point to the development of what

may be considered as the first stages in the evolution of something very akin to national consciousness in some of the Spanish monarchy's territories. It is evident that this trend could have threatened the stability of the imperial system, especially in times of political unrest, such as the crisis in 1640 studied by G. Parker. It is therefore not surprising to see that in government circles there was a consistent interest in all kind of projects and reforms to reinforce cooperation between the different lands of the monarchy, at least from the last decades of the sixteenth century (B. J. García). The well-known history of the "Unión de Armas" devised by Olivares shows that this usually aroused strong local reaction and provincial parochialism, and so their practical results were usually well beneath what their promoters had hoped. However, surprisingly as it may have seemed to Olivares himself, such failures did not lead to the dissolution of the Spanish Monarchy because of a second opposite trend which acted as a counterbalance.

As P. Cardim explains in his article, it should be noted firstly that terms such as national consciousness had a different meaning from that understood today. This is particularly important because in many cases the building of national and cultural identities was deemed compatible with belonging to a multinational empire, although there were some notable exceptions. There is an additional interesting aspect emphasised in several articles in the book (those by J.M Cauchies, J. Martínez Millán, S. Fernández Conti y F. Labrador and A. Esteban Estríngana y B. Lolo): being the head of the most powerful and richest empire of the time, the Spanish monarchy had a great deal to offer the various provincial élites in the form of bureaucratic positions, both at Court and in the government. According to the authors, this was the key to explaining the stability of the monarchy in the long run. It seems clear that the leading groups of the monarchy's various lands and kingdoms were fatally attracted by the positions the imperial administration and the army offered them, and so, with this knowledge, the Crown adopted what could be considered an "open door"policy, recruiting its officers and bureaucrats from every corner of the Empire, regardless of geographical (but not religious) background. This explains the continuous presence of Flemish, Castilian, Aragonese and Italian names among the holders of the imperial administration's most important positions and the fact that, for example, the Aragonese nobility controlled key government offices during the reign of Charles II, while their counterparts in Navarre occupied the same positions of privilege during the eighteenth century.

In this work the reader will find a global and updated view of crucial issues which help us to understand the way the Spanish Habsburgs ruled over their vast and scattered empire. If there was an imperial system, its essence should be found in the close collaboration between the central power and the provincial élites. Thanks to its global approach, the book will be a great help to all those interested in early modern European history. At the same time, the book poses some fascinating questions which testify to the high quality of the research carried out by the various authors. As often happened in similar cases, the rise of a cosmopolitan group of nobles, bureaucrats and officials, whose main allegiance was more to the monarchy and the dynasty than to their original kingdoms and lands, was one of the empire's main cohesive forces. The deepening of the relationships between the members of this sector may have given rise to the idea that they were part of the same political community and it could even be argued that in due time this would have led to the development of an idea of citizenship (however the arrival of the new Bourbon dynasty in Madrid at the beginning of the eighteenth century with the subsequent loss of the Italian and Flemish territories put an end to this possibility). The article by A. Álvarez Ossorio on the Milanese *jenízaros* supports this view, but it should be remembered that other cases seem to point in the opposite direction. To quote a well-known example, the history of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose multinational and refined nobility were not capable of withstanding the advances of mass nationalism, suggests that the presence of well-entrenched cosmopolitan groups of nobles and bureaucrats has not always been sufficient to develop the idea of belonging to the same political community, establishing the basis for the stability of a multinational empire or a multinational state, especially in modern mass societies. In any case, this should not hide the fact that the old problem about the relationship between the centre and the periphery is still very much an issue today: some initiatives promoted by the European Union in the last decades to solve this problem and the growth of a multinational and progressively more autonomous European bureaucracy would have sounded familiar to the the Spanish Habsburgs.

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JAMES M. MURRAY, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280-1390*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005, pp.409.

At first glance, this book seems a wide-ranging, detailed analysis of the city of Bruges' development, a turning-point in the history of medieval trading markets and, more generally, in that of European trading cities. However, although a good deal of the book is given over to a "scene by scene" analysis of Bruges' city life, as soon as the reader begins to read the text, it becomes evident that Bruges is not so much a pretext as a starting point for research that goes way beyond the subject in question and spreads in all directions to cover all the complex issues both in and around Bruges.

Gaining direct access to the sea made Bruges one of the most important ports in Europe: the city reached the apex of its prosperity in the fifteenth century. Murray ascribes this transformation to a combination of fortuitous changes, such as the shift to sea trade and the huge population flow to urban centres which brought about the rise of trading cities. Bruges' geographical situation helped to create the trading network which favoured wool, cloths, gold and "women". By attracting merchants from all over Europe and promoting cooperation among them, Bruges became a focal point for trade and created a sophisticated money market and a complex network of financial agents and brokers. The first economically active groups were merchants: they were soon joined by artisans who were indispensable for the inhabitants' everyday requirements. Many of them had to settle near merchants who supplied them with raw materials and became responsible for selling their products, often taking on the role of veritable entrepreneurs. By organising the movement of goods, the merchants – the fundamental force of all economic activity in the Middle Ages – encouraged economic specialisation and, therefore, the concentration of the population in the towns too.

The book has nine chapters and covers the period from 1280 (when the Belfry in Bruges, the seat of the civic government and the symbol of the town's independence, caught fire) until 1379, when civil war broke out. Murray uses the maps of the Bruges river and canal networks to reconstruct the layout of one of Flanders' most typical maritime cities, with its combination of natural and artificial waterways marking the central square, surrounded by the Spiegel, Kraan, Groene and Sint-Anna canals, with two main canals, the Langerei and

the Minnewater, connecting with the Damme and Dyver and forming the important north-south link. In the first decade of the fourteenth century the urban layout of the city evolved and was to remain unchanged throughout the Middle Ages. Murray describes its harbours, its inland waterways, its parish churches, its squares and its markets. The second circle of city walls, built in 1297, marked the completion of a resolute land-acquisition campaign on the part of the city, which brought the land both inside and outside the new city walls under the jurisdiction of the aldermen. Bruges' chief need was to acquire and control the routes which led to the sea, even if this meant neglecting the economic activity of the city's hinterland, and then investing in building and maintaining canals, sluices and dams, and, to an even greater extent, defending the guilds' monopolies and the liberalization of the urban territory, using various privileges to increase the city's prosperity and assert its economic superiority over the surrounding rural area. From 1300 onwards, trade moved northwards, seeking links with Damme and the other ports of the River Zwin. This gave rise to the monumental "New" Cloth Hall and the waterway which led to Zwin, favouring the growth of maritime trade and increasing the business of hostellers and moneychangers. Bruges' financial and commercial centre spread northwards from the central market square along Vlamingstraat and its branches. Inns, taverns, churches and meeting places which the communities of merchants and hostellers created and frequented were to be found in these streets, squares and buildings.

The Flemish hosteller was the most influential person a merchant could meet in the course of his trip to Bruges. As well as providing accommodation and a storage cellar for goods, a hosteller usually knew about all the contracts and answered for his guests, arranging to collect outstanding credit on their behalf, after they had left for home. His honesty was an essential requirement to obtain more advantageous prices. Together with countless other people (artisans, pedlars, moneychangers and so on), the hostellers created a system of commercial services, well known throughout Europe, consisting of lodgings, book-keeping and the administration of financial operations, credit and payment services, and a well-established entrepreneurial tradition. This system gave rise to the use of certain places specifically for financial operations, which were the precursors of the future stock exchanges of Antwerp and Amsterdam. The system culminated in the opening of the "New Antwerp Borse" in 1531.

Unlike other cities, Bruges welcomed foreign merchants: the Flemish were well aware that their prosperity depended to a large extent on foreigners and the Hanseatic League. This explains why they were keen to guard commercial privileges and to ensure that trading regulations were respected, and why they acted as arbitrators in disputes between Hanseatic League merchants who did not come under the jurisdiction of local tribunals. The presence of so many merchants from many different regions who developed their own financial systems (Italian bankers played a vital role), bolstered the financial power of Bruges, a city whose inns and banks were famous throughout Europe.

Alongside pawn shops and banks, an increasing number of brothels sprang up: it was no accident that these were to be found in the areas in which the merchants resided. By about 1300, these brothels, not too far away from the city centre, mirrored both the number of potential clients among the merchants resident in Bruges and the development of the commercial area towards the north. This is why the residential quarters, near the main waterways, were on the outskirts of the city, in an area dominated by the "evil inns" where gambling, prostitution and riots held sway. Tolerance on the part of the government and of public morals for the so-called "sex market" and for gambling was part of a deliberate policy to regulate property leases. Chapter eight of this book deals specifically with the "economic" role of women: we find not only information on the way women entered into business relations, but also more general considerations, such as the fact that prostitution was deemed an important business activity. Unlike other European cities, Bruges never adopted policies that relegated prostitution in the city's outskirts: on the contrary, following Roman law and adopting a permissive attitude towards a free market in prostitution, Bruges tended to consider prostitution as a necessary part of urban living, controlled by the city's social and financial élite, businessmen who made a lot of money by letting the houses and rooms used by prostitutes. A great deal of Bruges' financial turnover was connected with "women in the market" (when, on their husband's death, they had to take over his business) or with the "market in women", when, by prostituting themselves, women commercialized their bodies and became part of what in those days was a huge business concern.

It is impossible to review all Murray's research in the brief space of this book review: the city of Bruges is examined by means of a subtle, penetrating, well-documented and, above all, passionate analysis. This anlysis shows clearly that

the city's commercial success was due to the broadmindedness of its inhabitants, to its economic prosperity and, above all, to the fact that there was a large, heterogeneous urban population whose diverse needs, both for indispensable articles and for luxury goods, provided a great impetus to the circulation of people and goods.

Murray's research is very detailed and has taken him a long time to complete: he has concentrated on the birth of a capitalist urban prototype, and has spent years researching on many historical, economic, geographical, demographic and cultural issues. This book is a milestone in research on trading cities in the Middle Ages and on profound changes in the economic structure of the Western world.

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M.R. SMALLMAN-RAYNOR and A.D. CLIFF, *War Epidemics. An Historical Geography of Infectious Diseases in Military Conflict and Civil Strife, 1850-2000*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, pp.805.

Throughout the course of history, epidemics have left their mark on human life. They have been the subject of many analyses on the part of historians who have examined their demographic, social and economic impacts. The book reviewed here focuses on the connection between wars and epidemics.

Epidemic diseases have, in fact, often been a consequence of war and have raised the mortality figures much more than war itself, not only for the military but also among civilians. Smallman-Raynor and Cliff are fully aware that this subject is well-known and that a great deal of research has been done on it; this is why they have tackled the subject "with some trepidation" (*Preface*, p.IX), carving out a niche for themselves within a consolidated current of research. First of all, they have limited the time span of their research, choosing the period from 1850 to the present day: this choice was dictated by the greater availability of data for this period. Secondly, they have attached importance to some local variables,

[1] For the case of Madrid see, for example, J.M López García, *El impacto de la Corte en Castilla. Madrid y su territorio en la época moderna*, Siglo XXI, pp. 271 et. seg.

considering them useful for a better understanding of the spread of disease during a war. Thirdly, they have examined only epidemic diseases that were transmittable and could therefore be a direct consequence of war. Lastly, as the authors themselves make clear, they do not claim to have written an exhaustive study which examines all the major wars of the last two centuries: they have preferred to select only those wars which appeared of use to their research.

Given the complex nature of the subject, the book, which is enriched by a large bibliography, an index of names and keywords, numerous graphs, tables and pictures, begins with an opening section (*War and Disease*) which acts as a kind of preface that defines and introduces the subject, and at the same time forms the basis for most of the book. Written in two chapters (*Wars and War Epidemics* and *Epidemics in Early Wars*), this first section begins with some definitions about the concept of war and disease, and then goes on to specify the main sources used in writing the book, and to illustrate the structure of the entire volume; it then analyses the main epidemics that took place during wars from ancient times until 1850. Smallman-Raynor and Cliff thus provide a rapid and very useful introductory historical outline, in order to give an overall view before getting into a closer analysis.

In fact, the period the authors propose to study in depth goes from 1850 to about 1990. This period is examined in the next two sections of the book which make up its body. In particular, the second section (*Temporal Trends*), consisting of chapters three, four and five, deals with the state of mortality and infectious diseases in three different kinds of people involved in war during the last one and a half centuries: civilians, the military and refugees.

In the third chapter (*Mortality and Morbidity in Modern Wars, I: Civil Populations*), the authors concentrate on two cases, Australia, and England and Wales, and then go on to analyse another 31 countries in an attempt to present a global view of the impact of epidemic disease on the mortality rate and the disease rate among civilians. It is immediately obvious that, from about the 1850s, something changed: the death rate fell considerably, due to progress in the field of medicine and the widespread use of vaccination, but it tended to rise during a war, because of a worsening in sanitary conditions and medical treatment and because of mass movement of the population. Although in economically more advanced countries traditional epidemic diseases have been replaced by circulatory and cardiac illnesses and by cancer, in developing countries these

diseases continue to influence the death rate crucially. However, it must be pointed out that, in recent years in industrialized countries, too, there has been renewed interest in infectious diseases, due to the re-emergence of some old illnesses (such as tuberculosis) and the appearance of serious new diseases (for example, AIDS).

The spread of antibiotics and vaccinations, especially after 1945, caused a revolution in the causes of death and in the death rate in the military, just as in the civil population. This is clearly shown in the fourth chapter of the book (*Mortality and Morbidity in Modern Wars, II: Military Populations)*, where, with an analysis of the mortality trends in some wars between 1859 and 1914, it is stated that, until the First World War, it was mostly some traditional epidemic diseases which were responsible for the greatest number of deaths among soldiers.

Infectious diseases still have a very big impact on the third and last category of people involved in wars which the authors consider in the second section of their book: refugees. War in fact – as we are reminded in the fifth chapter (*Mortality and Morbidity in Modern Wars, III: Displaced Populations*) – causes a sudden deterioration in these peoples' sanitary and dietary conditions, thereby facilitating the spread of various kinds of epidemics among refugees. They thus fall victim to some common illnesses which, for the most part, are foreseeable and can be treated before it is too late, thanks to adequate humanitarian aid measures. Some concrete examples support the authors' opinion, such as the evacuation of schoolchildren in Great Britain during the Second World War, and the more recent evacuation of the Palestinian population and the many Central African refugees who were forced to flee from their war-ravaged lands.

The third section of the book (*A Regional Pattern of War Epidemics*) abandons the more general analysis of mortality and disease trends from 1850 to 1900, and moves on to consider a series of regional cases in the same period. The sixth chapter (*Tracking Epidemics*) identifies the techniques used by geographers to examine epidemics that broke out during a war. Chapters seven to eleven use these techniques to study some concrete cases. Five factors emerge which help to trace the history of the connection between war and epidemics: the mobilisation of troops which fostered the spread of infectious diseases; military encampments which could facilitate the spread of epidemics; the emergence and re-emergence of epidemic illnesses sparked off by war; sexually-

transmitted diseases, a common scourge among the military and a type of disease which spread during wars since ancient times; epidemics that broke out in islands which played a fundamental role in military history.

Each of these five subjects is examined in one of the following five chapters, each one with reference to a particular geographical area and, within this area, with reference to three or four of the most significant wars. Military mobilisation is studied in the seventh chapter in the context of wars that broke out in the United States (*Pan America: Military Mobilization and Disease in the United States*); military encampments in chapter eight in connection with European wars (*Europe: Camp Epidemics*); the emergence and re-emergence of epidemics in Asia and the Far East in chapter nine (*Asia and the Far East: Emerging and Re-emerging Diseases*); sexually-transmitted diseases, particularly in Africa in chapter ten (*Africa: Soldiers, Sexually-transmitted Diseases and War*); and epidemics in islands in Oceania in chapter eleven (*Oceania: War Epidemics in South Pacific Islands*).

The five subjects studied by the author are only some of those which could be analysed when considering the connection between wars and epidemics: the authors themselves point this out in chapter twelve (*Further Regional Studies*) where they examine other cases which were not included in the previous chapters for thematic or geographical reasons. Overall, a single conclusion emerges from all the cases examined: between 1850 and 1900, epidemic diseases were not the main causes of illness and death among the military. This was thanks to the spread of vaccinations and the improvement in military sanitary conditions. However, epidemic disease increases again when war takes place in environmental conditions which are unfamiliar from an epidemiological point of view.

In short, our present-day societies have attained significant goals in medicine and hygiene. However, the spectre of war and the damage, from the epidemiological point of view, that war can cause continues to give people sleepless nights, not only in developing countries but also in the richer countries. War worsens normal living standards for both civilians and the military: it deprives people of comfortable accommodation, medical support and adequate food and water supplies; it lowers hygiene standards; it destroys sanitary facilities and stops disease-controlling programmes; it leads to population concentration and overcrowding, and causes conditions of mental and physical stress which

can weaken an individual's immune defence mechanism. Together with other reasons, this is why epidemics spread more readily during a war than during peacetime.

The connection between war and epidemics remains very strong even today. Even though today's wars are not as catastrophic from an epidemiological point of view as those in the past, and although vaccinations have lowered the death rate among the military, fewer hygiene and sanitary controls and the suspension of vaccination programmes during a war increase the spread of epidemic disease in the civilian population. Furthermore, wars remain an excellent opportunity to spread some serious illnesses that have recently broken out, such as AIDS.

In this sense, the danger level must not be lowered. And the fourth and last section of the book (*Prospects*) takes on a particular meaning. Consisting of only one chapter, chapter thirteen (*War and Disease: Recent Trends and Future Threats*), it attempts to go beyond 1990 by examining the spread of epidemics in some recent wars, such as the Gulf War of 1990-91, the civil war in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995 and the battle against terrorism that began in 2001. From 1990, deaths caused by war have been concentrated in two parts of the world: Sub-Saharian Africa and the emerging countries of the Middle East. Up to 2020 - if we wish to hazard a guess - in those two areas the greatest cause of death will remain war. In this sense, war-associated disease, such as poverty, will probably stay with us in future years. Perhaps this is another reason why the subjects dealt with in this book are still very relevant and deserve further research.

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E. VAN VEEN, *Decay or Defeat? An Inquiry into the Portuguese Decline in Asia 1580-1645*, Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Leiden University, Leiden 2000, pp.VI-306.

M. CHAIKLIN, *Cultural Commerce and Dutch Commercial Culture. The Influence of European Material Culture on Japan*, 1700-1850, Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Leiden University, Leiden 2003, pp.V-275.

These two books, both published within the space of a few years and in the same series (*Studies in Overseas History* by the Research School, CNWS, Center of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University), complement each other in that each one deals exhaustively with a subject of great importance for the history of trade and the European economy between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century: the supremacy of the Asian markets. The question underlying Van Veen's research gives him the opportunity to re-examine, not only all the social and economic forces at play in the creation of the Portuguese colonial empire, but also to bring into focus the different theories about the rise and fall of the *Estado da India*.

Van Veen points out that still "to this day Portuguese historiography very rarely escapes from overemphasizing" the crucial role played by the monarchy in national expansion. Besides this, during the Salazar régime "the ideology of the national corporate state" had exploited "the grandeur and uniqueness of Portugal"; conversely, and understandably, historians in exile during the dictatorship had seen in the country's great past the seeds to its future independence. Van Veen explains that it is only in recent years that research has moved away from the school that sees the monarchy and the aristocratic élite as the driving forces of Portuguese expansion, pointing, instead, to the competition "between nobility and *burguesia*" as the crucial factor in commercial development. The Dutch bourgeoisie evolved in an orderly way between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, but the Portuguese bourgeoisie was more open and disordered with less incisive political influence. The Portuguese bourgeoisie was made up of bankers, merchants and ship-owners, in other words "the executors of the Portuguese expansion", the financiers of the Portuguese élite who, however, still considered them as part of the *povo*, a very vague category; Van Veen explains that "in general terms it would mean the lower classes". The *povo* "also included what are now called the "middle class" people: medical doctors, shopkeepers, moneylenders, tax collectors and the artisans". Many of these professions were exercised by the so-called new Christians (*cristaos novos*). After examining all the events in the period of the Portuguese Empire's decline, i.e. the period which Portuguese historiography has neglected the most, Van Veen draws his conclusions by focussing on the internal decline of the kingdom and hence the decline of its economic supremacy rather than on a defeat attributable solely to the expansion of foreign powers

such as Holland. He writes: "As compared to the dynamic developments in Dutch society during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese society was stagnant. Everything and everybody had its place in the world and even the Habsburg régime could not change that. Until the end of the seventeenth century at least, the Portuguese nobility, the clergy and the third estate were able to maintain the existing division of power, the distribution of income and the prevailing mentality". This was a formal, obsequious mentality, consumed with self-interest and corruption and dominated increasingly after the Counter-Reformation by an anti-semitism which undermined collaboration with the economic groups that had been responsible for Portugal's fortune from the beginning. Unlike colonialism in Brazil and in Africa, Portuguese colonialism in Asia neither occupied nor administered the hinterland of the countries it conquered in an economic sense: by means of trading posts, the Portuguese preferred to control the trade in products rather than the sources of production, to the obvious detriment of laying down deeper "political" roots. This happened for two reasons: firstly, Portugal had fewer men and fewer ships compared to other maritime powers, and secondly, the Portuguese were forced to collaborate with the merchant classes of countries such as India, Indochina, China and Japan whose political system was based on feudalism and which had military forces as well. Portuguese traders never attempted to drive the Asians out entirely from the different markets: on the contrary, they often worked together with local merchants and shipowners, forming companies with them, entrusting their goods to them and chartering their ships.

It must also be pointed out, as has been done in a recent publication (José Martìnez Millàn, "The crisis of the "Castilian Party" and the transformation of the Spanish Monarchy in the transition from the government of Philip II to the government of Philip III" in *Monarquìa y Corte en la Espana moderna*, Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, II, 2003), that, immediately after the Spanish conquest of Portugal, the plan to penetrate China both at a commercial and a religious level - a project which was favoured by the Spanish authorities in the Philippines in agreement with some Jesuits - failed because Rome was against it, fearing the establishment of a universal, jurisdictional monarchy. And so the independence regained in 1668 did not cause Portugal's by then jeopardized economic fortunes to rise again.

Van Veen, therefore, distances himself from the traditional interpretation

which ascribed the fall of the Portuguese Empire solely to the competition from Holland with its powerful Dutch East Indian Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie-VOC*), to which he gives ample space in this book and about which he wrote in the December 2001 edition of *The Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* (*Voc Strategies in the Far East, 1605-1640*). This has also been the subject of debate recently (December 2002) in an international conference , "*L'Empire portugais face aux autres empires*", held in Paris.

Chaiklin's book is about the Dutch influence which was established after Japan's reaction against the Portuguese missionaries and the banning of Christianity in 1587. By examining the activities of the Dutch East India Company, Chaiklin aims to discredit the cliché that "the Japanese were never interested in expanding trade because Japan was self-sufficient and had no need for the things the European brought. This theory suggests that European trade declined steadily because there was no demand in Japan for the things that the European could bring". With the aid of the Dutch trading companies' records held in the Central State Archives in the Hague (especially log books and request lists from high-ranking Japanese officials), and with the help of Japanese printed sources, Chaiklin shows, on the contrary, not only the importance of the European trading companies' cultural influence, but also their effects on politics, industry and technology. "Dutch influence in Japan has also been underestimated because trade has been viewed as a solely economic phenomenon", writes Chaiklin. In actual fact, "the exchange of gifts between Dutch traders and the Japanese was an important form of diplomatic, commercial and social interaction. Gifts played an important role in the transfer of manufactured goods to the Japanese". The idea of gifts as a price paid in order to carry on business was typical of a European practice "of accommodation to local customs throughout Asia, where pleasing potentates with blandishments was an effective practice of all the East India Companies".

Chaiklin insists on the fact that, in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, "although commercial in conception", the Dutch presence in Japan "had political ramifications; in the vacuum created by the lack of diplomatic relations, the merchants were pressed to fill this role". In a Japan which, from the seventeenth century, tended towards internal unification after the dissolution of the previously widespread feudalism, the policy of trade and gifts that preceded the forced opening up of the ports following Commodore Perry's 1854 mission, occasioned

interest, influenced cultural trends and prompted requests on the part of the high-ranking dignitaries. At the same time, however, the arrival of European manufactured goods (clocks, glassware and astronomical instruments) led to technical transfer and to the subsequent growth of Japanese production including the fire-arms sector.

A good example of this exportation of cultural models which was at one and the same time an opportunity for Japanese factories and a huge turnover for European traders from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century is the famous Kakiemon porcelain, with an annual production of some 100,000 pieces. Produced in western style and with western-inspired designs for Dutch merchants selling on the European market, for three centuries these porcelain pieces decorated aristocrats' homes throughout Europe, and inspired the manufacture of reproductions in German, French and English porcelain-manufacturing companies.

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