
REVIEWS OF BOOKS

P. AMANN, *The Corncribs of Buzet. Modernizing Agriculture in the French Southwest*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. XIV-292.

Heavily influenced by Eugene Weber, this book could well have been entitled "From Peasant to Farmer". By studying five communes of the Haute Garonne, situated in different agricultural areas in southwest France — Buzet sur Tarn, Juzet d'Izaut, Saint Cézert, Cadours and Loubens (which are separately treated in five of the six chapters making up the book) — Amann sets out to analyse the ways in which agricultural modernisation came about in this region of rural France. For this purpose, according to Amann, the most important indicator is not technical and agronomical process but rather the extent to which commercial objectives took over from the traditional goals of family self-sufficiency in the peasant economy. While important technical changes had been occurring in these regions ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century (like the introduction of artificial meadows and the spread of chemical fertilisers) it was only after the second world war that self-sufficiency (or, more precisely, semi-self-sufficiency) ceased to be the farmer's main objective.

The *fin des paysans* has been a constant theme in major works on European rural history. Marc Bloch, Emilio Sereni, Slicher van Bath, to name only the most illustrious historians, have all analysed the origins of the capitalist transformation of agriculture in western Europe. However, except for a few historians who have studied technical innovations — like David Grigg — historical studies on the subject have never seriously gone beyond the period of the second world war; analyses of the last few decades have been left to agrarian experts and economists. Partly to fill this lacuna, Amann's book focuses on the post-war period and is based primarily on oral sources. Amann has interviewed first-hand witnesses such as agrarian experts, farmers and local administrators, many of whom have lived through a radical change which has been accompanied by an exceptional growth in land and labour productivity and the reorganisation of traditional agriculture as a result of the introduction of increasingly more sophisticated machinery.

Modernisation stemmed principally from economic motives. To give one example: while in 1952 a farmer owning twelve hectares produced the equivalent of twice the average annual wage of a male factory worker, in 1982

the farmer obtained the equivalent of half to two thirds of the factory worker's income. If the farmer had not improved his farming methods and extended the land under cultivation, he could not have survived. Economically speaking, therefore, modernisation was an irresistible necessity. Industrialisation, urbanisation and rural exodus with its repercussions on labour, threatened the very survival of the farm and forced the farmer to modernise and innovate — introducing machinery, improved implements, selected seeds, chemical fertilisers, more rational rotations and farming methods, modern irrigation systems — so that he could still live as a "paysan" and work the land.

Nonetheless, it was not only economic considerations which weighed on modernisation. There is also the wider context of social change which has to be taken into account. The decisions and behaviour of agricultural groups were not purely dictated by economic factors and the search to minimise production costs; the desire to satisfy "qualitative" needs, that is, to obtain the most from the social and human benefits of progress, also played a part. The introduction of machinery brought the countryside closer to the town and made it possible for the peasant world to become urbanised and to forge ties with the outside. For example, in the hilly areas of central Italy where sharecropping was widely practised, mechanisation got under way on quite a large scale during the 1940s in order to respond to new needs springing from the improvement of living standards: the tenant purchased machinery to reduce physical toil, to increase the amount of free time, to have more contact with the centres of social life and to avoid the trap of isolation.

If Amann's book adds very little to established wisdom about the general causes of modernisation, his analysis of the variables which explain the differing situations of the communes in the Haute Garonne, and in particular the different levels of modernisation reached in the various communes, is nonetheless original. What were the preconditions which made a group of young peasants ready to invest and turn themselves into agricultural capitalists? What were the differences in the responses of the five communes? Why were Saint Cézert, Buzet and Loubens able to seize the new opportunities more effectively than other communes? Discarding land endowment, agricultural environment and historical tradition as crucial factors Amann dwells on relations between new and old generations.

In his view, what mattered most was the decision of farmers over 45 years of age to invest in innovation only when they could count on a younger family member to succeed them. The full adoption of new methods had to coincide with the expectation that someone was ready to exploit them after the farmer's death. This would coincide with the decision of the son, son-in-law and daughter to continue working the land. In contrast to the confrontational nature of the relationship between father and off-spring in Cadours, for example, was the quite different situation in Buzet. Apart from this fundamental characteristic, other factors concurred and explain the difference in experience among the communes. In Buzet group cohesion and the existence of a leader

gave the best results. In Loubens, the lack of cohesion was compensated for by the presence of leadership. In Saint Cézert the role of outsiders and the effects of imitation and adaptation were crucial factors in the process of agricultural modernisation.

As far as methodology is concerned, the author treads the difficult but fertile dividing line between history and social sciences. Alongside a chronological analysis going back to the eighteenth century, Amann uses methods which are outside the parameters of traditional historical research, including oral sources employed in anthropological disciplines and concepts like generation structures, group cohesion, the role of leadership, borrowed from sociology. Yet, although this sociological approach is stimulating and innovatory and in parts well argued, the author's tendency to underestimate conventional historical analysis and the role of the agricultural environment raises questions. The problem lies in the fact that it is difficult to generalise on the basis of such interpretations. Can we really say that in other situations economic and environmental conditions, and, more generally, structural conditions played a secondary role? Take Italy, for example. Recent studies on Italian agriculture published by Marsilio confirm the validity of the very arguments which Amann tends to scale down: namely that the better-endowed regions — low hill and flat areas — and the areas traditionally linked to markets, were those most affected by agricultural modernisation. In the Po Valley, specialised crops took over from the dense green belt made up of trees and vines and in central Italy one and two-crop systems took over from mixed crop farming. In South Italy, on the other hand, the transformation of dry areas into well-watered land — owing largely to special government intervention, irrigation and reclamation projects — led to the «descent» of tree-growing from the hills to the plain. The low-lying areas became gardens and water was used in horticulture, citrus-fruit growing, viticulture, fruit-growing, and to expand pasture land and live-stock raising. In other words, modernisation highlighted the divergence between the better-endowed areas and the less favoured areas, benefiting the former and aggravating the conditions of the latter.

Despite this observation, we can say that by studying a limited area, Amann has succeeded in depicting a far-reaching historical process, which has involved successive post-war generations. Such a process of transformation has not only seen an exceptional growth in economic indicators but has also seen the birth of a new way of living and a different relationship with nature, which has marked the end, in the west, of an entire civilisation, both cultural and material.

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J. BOURKE, *Husbandry to Housewifery. Women, Economic Change and Housework in Ireland 1890-1914*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, pp. XI-342.

The reconstruction of the history of women's employment in the contemporary age is somewhat problematic. The first and certainly the biggest problem lies in the lack of archive sources which could be used to provide data and information on women's occupations in different periods. Of course there is an extensive literature on the subject but the real difficulty starts when one tries to dig deeper into the material with the tools of modern methodology. One is often left with the disappointing conclusion that the information and data all paint a male-dominated picture, as frequently occurs in various other fields of historical enquiry.

The second difficulty lies in the choice of area of research and whether one should concentrate on rural or urban environments; each of these implies two distinct types of economic and social context in which women have performed very different functions and roles which are not always easy to analyse. We need to dispense with clichés insisting on the perennial condition of female subservience and women's inability to operate their own choices regarding work opportunities. Rather we must define very accurately the parameters of research, reconstruct the channels through which women achieved economic and social mobility in a set geographical context, and avoid generalisations and recourse to models which are all too often based on ideological preconcepts rather than on actual historical reality.

The third difficulty lies in choosing the chronological framework of the research; is the period of the study one of major change and restructuring as far as work concerned or is it a period characterised by employment stability and the prevalence of traditional and lasting occupations? In these cases it is highly risky to flatten the analysis of women's working conditions using male-biased models. In research of this kind great caution is needed and we should be aware that while there are correlations between the working conditions of men and women, there are also many differences and a wide range of topics to be discussed.

The difficulties we have referred to above hardly appear to have escaped Jonna Bourke whose study on Irish rural communities from 1880 to 1910 is an important and original analysis of this controversial subject. The period chosen by Bourke for her study was one of great technological change and transformation as far as employment was concerned. Around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century there was a rapid and general change in the type of crops produced in Irish agriculture and substantial investment of capital, mainly in the mechanisation of production. Moreover censuses taken in the decades under study show that the percentage of male workers remained more or less constant whereas the number of female workers fell sharply. A fairly large proportion of women were thus thrown off regular employment, above all in the industrial sector, although in other sectors,

such as teaching, there was a notable increase in the number of women employed.

Naturally such figures do not refer to the entire spectrum of female employment and a study based on these data alone would produce a distorted picture. In this connection one of the great merits of Bourke's work is that she has conducted a far-reaching enquiry, elucidating on every aspect of female employment, including occupations which only on the surface appear to be unconnected to the production process. The collapse of female employment in those sectors which during the nineteenth century had been the exclusive domain of women, brought about a big increase in women's work in the home. Housework, which has been traditionally neglected in studies of this kind because of the difficulty of fitting it into conventional occupations, is the key to understanding the complex restructuring of employment affecting women living in rural areas in Ireland in this period. Although in the censuses carried out up to 1926 there are no figures and information regarding full-time housework, the latter was widespread, even by the end of the nineteenth century. Related to the progressive increase in women's employment in the home was the contemporaneous reduction in the number of servants, especially in smaller families.

Was full-time house-work a step backwards or forward in relation to the more complex condition of women? The question is certainly stimulating but very difficult to answer considering the lack of economic and social indicators able to provide us with an exhaustive picture of the advantages and disadvantages and also because it contains a series of problems and pitfalls connected to preconceptions about modernity and labour productivity which are not easy to distinguish with clarity. Nonetheless, the impression conveyed by this book is that housework was not always a negative experience. In that precise historical and geographical context the women who decided to give up paid work in exchange for housework or who chose to be housewives from the start actually increased their chances for improving their status and standard of living. The miserable working conditions throughout the nineteenth century and the high cost of progress which was borne by millions of men and women workers are only too well known. In this respect housework — which should be considered as productive as other types of employment even though it is not paid for with a regular salary — did not imply a sharp drop in women's standards of living, nor a reduction in the economic and social role played by women within the family. Thus, contrary to what we might expect from an interpretation based on the over-simplistic idea of history as a progressive and straightforward process, Bourke shows that careful research and the proper use of documentation provide ideas and incentives for a more flexible and broader analysis. The attempt to link the research to recent studies on the working conditions of women in other countries, especially Britain, is interesting, although this field of enquiry would appear to be still in its infancy and completely open. Certainly the task of coordinating and linking up all the research hitherto carried out on the subject is long and demanding but it would

yield very useful results and help provide a picture that more accurately reflects historical reality, which is indeed the primary intention of the book under review.

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J. GOODMAN, *Tobacco in History. The Cultures of Dependence*, Routledge, London and New York, 1993, pp. XIII-280.

The origin of tobacco is very remote and goes back more than 8,000 years. Tobacco was then known in the form of two types of plants — the *Nicotiana rustica* and the *Nicotiana tabacum* — which were to be found in North and South America. Its success can be largely explained in terms of its economic importance; although chemically speaking it is a complex plant, it easily adapts to different atmospheric and geological conditions.

Throughout the centuries the history of tobacco has not always followed a trend of unbroken and irresistible development and has been subject to oscillations and shocks. Its conspicuous expansion resulted from numerous conflicts and compromises. However, one aspect has always been present in the history of tobacco and provides the main theme in the research under review: that is to say, the relationship of dependency which, from the very beginning, grew up between tobacco and man, both in his capacity as a consumer and as a producer.

In the opening pages of Goodman's book, the primary role played by tobacco among American Indian cultures emerges very clearly. The indigenous populations of the New Continent made extensive use of hallucinating substances: by changing their levels of consciousness they believed that they could communicate with spirits in the supernatural world. The main function of tobacco here was to help create hallucinations during shamanistic rituals; it has been proven that the nicotine content of the tobacco used on these occasions was much higher than that present in the products then being sold on the market. In particular, tobacco was universally acclaimed as a medicine whose effectiveness was unequalled. It was used everywhere both in prevention and for healing purposes.

It is not surprising that when they arrived in the New World the Europeans were struck by the therapeutic importance attributed to tobacco by the local populations. In Nicolas Mornandes' text which was published in 1571 and was one of the most widely-known and acclaimed works on the new medicinal plants discovered in America, the healing properties of tobacco were extolled. Yet Mornandes was not the only one to sing the praises of tobacco. Although we do not have precise data, various records testify to the fact that tobacco consumption in Europe had already taken root even before the publication of Mornandes' book and that the first pipe factory in London opened around

1570. So we can say that in the third decade of the seventeenth century tobacco completed its circumnavigation, not only as a consumer product but also as a crop.

Once tobacco became widely-known, its role rapidly changed and it became a product of mass consumption. From being a medical and healing product it was transformed into an article for recreation and pleasure. In Great Britain alone imports rose from 25,000 pounds in 1603 to 38 million pounds in 1700. The pipe became the symbol of tobacco smoking throughout Northern and North-western Europe while the cigar was largely confined to the Iberian peninsula; on the other hand, tobacco chewing was not widely practised in the Old World.

Parallel to the expansion of the product in its different forms was the development of systems for cultivating the plant. The correlation between European investments in the New Continent and the setting up of tobacco plantations is a constant in the history of colonisation. Compared to other crops, tobacco has two main advantages: the first is that it has a brief growth cycle (about 9 months); the second is its readiness to adapt to different soils and climates. Moreover, unlike sugar growing, tobacco growing did not involve an immediate change in scale: for a long time small holders continued to play a key role, even when production became increasingly concentrated with the widening of the market.

Of all the regions in the USA, the area around Chesapeake Bay was noted for its enormous production of tobacco which was mostly exported to Great Britain. In 1700 37 million pounds of tobacco were produced while in 1771 the figure rose to more than 100 million pounds. However we should note that these figures refer only to official trade and do not take account of smuggling which was widespread. The kind of society which grew up around tobacco was not hierarchical but open and dynamic, typical of the societies based on the «Indenture System».

As regards trade between Britain and her colonies, London — which was where the Virginia Company was based — was the centre for imports from the New World. In the eighteenth century, moreover, while many of the Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonies geared production towards other products, such as sugar, the British colonies intensified tobacco production. At the beginning of the eighteenth century London lost its trade primacy and Glasgow became the foremost port for tobacco imports from Chesapeake. Glasgow's development stemmed from both the powerful position occupied by the «Tobacco Lords» and from the fact that it offered very low freight rates. It was only after the American Revolution that London regained its centrality, partly in consequence of Glasgow's decline.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Great Britain was the centre for the trade in re-exports. At the beginning of the century such trade was worth £ 421,000 annually while on the eve of the outbreak of the American Revolution its value rose to more than £ 900,000 annually. The countries to which Britain

re-exported colonial produce were France, Flanders and Holland which consumed about two-thirds of British tobacco exports.

The growth in the consumption of cigarettes is a much more recent phenomenon. It occurred during the second part of the nineteenth century, largely thanks to James B. Duke, and within a few years it reached very high levels. Between 1870 and 1880 the total number of cigarettes consumed in the USA rose from 14 million to 409 million. Duke's success was mainly based on the fact that he worked for a large international market and on his extensive and very effective advertising campaigns to popularise his brand and to make it familiar and agreeable to tobacco lovers.

Mechanisation helped to boost production which increased strikingly. For example, in 1884 Duke's factories were fitted with the machine that J. Bonsak had created three years earlier and which was able to produce around 100,000 to 120,000 cigarettes daily, equivalent to the daily output of 30 to 40 workers. In 1889 an agreement among the major producers, promoted by Duke, about the purchase of leaves was the final step towards the creation of the trust known as the American Tobacco Company. Duke intended to gain control over the entire sector of tobacco manufacture in the USA. This strategy was almost a complete success: within a few years the American Tobacco Company accounted for no less than 75% of the production of manufactured tobacco. In 1911 the Department of Justice ordered the dissolution of the Trust, as it was considered contrary to the Sherman Act.

However, the process of concentration was not checked and continued in the USA even though during the twentieth century substantial changes occurred in the geography of tobacco manufacture. Tobacco growing expanded throughout the world. There has been a significant improvement in technology and in fertilisers which has led to increased production and also to a more sophisticated and more complex manufacturing process. Tobacco production in the USA has been joined, and in some cases surpassed, by production in several Asiatic countries. In particular, China now occupies a very important position and has become the largest producer of tobacco in the world, even though most of her products are destined to the home market. In 1984 a quarter of the world production of tobacco was produced in China, corresponding to a half of Asia's entire production and to double the amount produced in the USA. Lastly, monopolies have taken on increasing importance, especially for the large profits they raise for government finances; in 1988, for example, government monopolies produced around 60% of the cigarettes sold around the world.

The basic themes dealt in this book, which we have attempted to summarise here, help us to understand the complexity of this historical reconstruction and Goodman's merit lies in having succeeded in fitting it into a single, coherent and broad-based study which is carefully documented.

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W. C. HOLMES, *Opera Observed. Views of a Florentine Impresario in the Early Eighteenth Century*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1993, pp. 256.

The role of the opera impresario, the financial and artistic problems in the opera management system, and the importance of musical patronage are all subjects of recent research in the history of music, and clearly show how the discipline has been enriched by new fields of enquiry concerned not only with general historical questions but also with more strictly economic issues.

Opera Observed by William C. Holmes is part of this new trend in research and provides a fairly complete picture of the background work involved in the staging of a musical performance in Florence's most important theatre in the early eighteenth century.

The title announces the subject matter, and the sub-title reveals how it will be approached: both arouse interest and expectation. Opera, the seventeenth century in Florence, the La Pergola theatre and the Albizzi (1644-1745), one of the most famous Florentine families, are all familiar subjects to both experts on opera and less specialist readers on the subject. And so this book would seem to be a rather traditional account of the history of opera in Florence, but the approach adopted by Holmes is not at all what one would expect. His study is an interpretation and an appraisal of that history which takes its place in the broader context of the development of the operatic theatre.

As the author himself states in the *acknowledgements*, the book is the result of years and years of work backed up by extensive collaboration of a great many people. Tracing the documents involved many of the libraries in Florence and more than one archive: research in the archives of the *Accademia degli Immobili*, which is normally closed to the public, proved fruitful; documents found in private collections, such as the family archives of Count Francesco Guicciardini, were interesting. The discovery, in Prof. H. Mayer Brown's private collection, of a substantial number of opera *libretti* pertaining to theatres in Florence was particularly useful; lastly, the Albizzi archive collection of letters and documents regarding the musical patronage of Ferdinando de' Medici which revealed hitherto unknown biographical episodes was of fundamental importance.

The first part of the book deals essentially with non-musical matters: Florence's political and economical difficulties in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the founding of the La Pergola theatre by the *Accademia degli Immobili*, the story of Florence's most important theatre which was closed for the first time in 1663, the story of the Cocomero theatre, the Albizzi family, Ferdinando's Grand Duchy and the reopening of the theatre in 1718, the publication, the contents and the revision of the *libretti* which often complied with the singers' demands. The second part of the book deals more specifically with impresarios' contracts, production problems, the Florentine impresario's correspondence with other impresarios, and the clashes between impresarios and singers. This part ends with the arrival of the Austrians in Florence and the

subsequent changes in the socio-cultural life of the city and of its most important theatre.

There are three appendixes with three kinds of sources: 1) coins in circulation in Florence in the eighteenth century; 2) letters concerning the Albizzi correspondence on the musical patronage of the Grand Prince Ferdinando de' Medici; 3) annotated *libretti* from the private collection of Prof. Howard Mayer Brown. In smaller print than the rest of the book, these ten pages provide extremely interesting sources.

Nineteen illustrations, all in black and white, give us an interesting sample of pages from *libretti* (it is interesting to compare the original *libretti* with the *libretti* adapted for the company of singers and the requirements of the Florentine theatre), portraits of various people, engravings of sets, documents, plans of theatres and caricatures. The cover illustration, *Il suggeritore d'opera* by Anton Maria Zanetti, evokes vividly the theme of «backstage» in opera, bringing to mind the setting of the wings.

Another addition to the text is the mostly partial reproduction of many of the letters examined, scattered throughout the various chapters. In the Appendix, the letters concerning operatic productions are arranged according to the author, in the same order as they are catalogued; single correspondence is easily reconstructed with the aid of the references in the notes. The notes comment carefully on the contents of the documents and provide detailed information on people and episodes; the text of the letters is almost always given in Italian. Some indication of the contents of the correspondence will show its importance. Various documents are about the stages and procedures of the contracts offered by the impresario Albizzi.

Preparation for the Carnival season usually began six months before: on 12 September 1733, Luca Casimiro Albizzi wrote to Luigi Antinori, offering him 200 *scudi*, the equivalent of 2,000 *paoli*, to sing as first tenor at La Pergola. For the same season, he offered 60 *doppie* to the Venetian tenor Francesco Venturini (1,800 *paoli*), 130 *scudi* (1,300 *paoli*) to Giovanni Guaetta and 20 Florentine *scudi* (2,500 *paoli*) to the «young virtuoso», Giovanni Battista Mancini. This was the scale of the pay offered. However, an impresario's most difficult task began at the opening of the season when there were often quarrels among the different singers: problems were no longer merely organisational and great diplomacy was required.

Hitherto unknown, many of the engagement proposals that Albizzi made to singers and musicians appear in this book. From the documents studied, material emerges regarding Albizzi's relationships with other impresarios, some from other cities, in particular, Gualandi's engagement and the correspondence with Filippo Nozzoli, a Florentine friend who lived in Naples (pp.105 -117). But if the soprano Margherita Gualandi was the cause of Albizzi's troubles with Naples, there is no doubt that Giovanni Battista Pinacci's greed was the cause of his problems in Rome. The correspondence with Antonio Fontana and Ottavio Acciaiuoli, both Florentine noblemen living in Rome, reveals their mediation in

the problems regarding a contract between Albizzi and Pinacci. The book also includes the correspondence between Albizzi and the Roman impresario Paolo Maria Maccarani, and between Albizzi and Bartolomeo Corsini, the *Sovrintendente* of the royal theatres and an internationally famous politician.

Another very interesting correspondence is that concerning the contract of Senesino, the Sienese castrato Francesco Antonio Bernardi, who ended his long and splendid career at La Pergola.

The end of the Medici dynasty and the arrival of the Austrians changed Florentine history, creating confusion in the financial and artistic management of Florence's most important theatre. The impresario «Albizzi had been forced to cope with many emergencies in his career, but never of such size» (p. 156).

A wealth of information about the theatres of Florence during the Austrian period is to be found in the government papers in Florence's *Archivio di Stato*, but adds nothing to the history of *La Pergola* before 1740, and so is of little use to the author.

Albizzi's reply to Carlo Arrigoni is revealing: the Florentine flute player and composer, who was in Vienna at the time, had asked to be engaged for the Carnival season 1737-1738, which was cancelled following the death of the Grand-Duke Giovan Gastone.

A last but important addition to the book is the bibliography which, considering the size of the book, is rather poor in references to a subject already amply dealt with, for example by John Rosselli, whose *Il sistema produttivo, 1780-1880* in *Storia dell'opera italiana*, Turin, 1987, is mentioned. But Rosselli's imposing work, *L'impresario d'opera*, Turin, Edt, 1985, the first to reconstruct from an economic and artistic point of view the impresario's role in the Italian theatre, is ignored. It does not seem to be a bibliography concentrated exclusively on the subject of the book, because some texts on opera in other cities, on opera in other periods of history and on other famous families are included. So why not include, together with Rosselli, Michael Robinson's monumental work on Neapolitan opera and J. Grundy Fanelli's research on another theatre in Tuscany in the eighteenth century: *Il Patrocinio musicale e la condizione economica dei musicisti a Pistoia nella prima metà del Settecento*, in *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, vol. XXVIII-1993-n. 2?

As far as the contents of the book are concerned, we shall try to emphasise the crucial points, since it is impossible to deal with each of the nine chapters singly. Holmes' interpretation of the Florentine impresario in the early eighteenth century is one with which we can agree: the «artistic conflict» between the impresario Albizzi and the scenographer Pietro Righini is described competently.

Research on music in Florence has generally concentrated on performances given in the local theatre and on the most important musicians who worked in the city, but several authors have published works in a field of enquiry that has attracted growing interest in recent years. However only recently has research moved towards a more careful examination of the protagonists themselves and

their environment, an environment which felt the effects of the delicate equilibrium between the musicians, the Church, the local nobility, the Medici and other Florentine aristocrats. In the early eighteenth century, if the local nobility, either as clerics or as lay people, did not pay, every type of musical activity in Tuscany was paid for almost exclusively by the Medici. At that time in Florence, as elsewhere, opera took on its definitive identity as a heterogeneous theatrical show, to be enjoyed by a paying audience of varied social extraction, and was defined as a genre: this development benefitted from the particular social and economic conditions of the time.

The treating of many different aspects of the subject is also admirable. These include a focusing on individual figures (Luca Casimiro degli Albizzi, Pietro Righini, Margherita Gualandi, Giovanni Battista Pinacci, Francesco Antonio Bernardi), the definition of an intellectual movement (the *Accademia degli Immobili* in Florence), the events in the history of a theatre (*La Pergola*), accurate details about particularly significant and emblematic operas (*Adriano in Siria*, *Semiramide*, *Ezio...*), aesthetic discussions on a genre which was still being defined, the appearance of the professional *librettist*, the transformation of singers into *dive*, the emergence of conventions, the revision of *libretti* and lastly the analysis of particular theatrical roles. Chapter 4, «Impresarial Contracts, Stage Sets and Pietro Righini», is particularly well done: in this chapter Holmes states the central point of his research and the sources from which he has worked. Generally the most interesting and the best-presented part seems that in which Holmes analyses all the «contract» stages of the opera, when the impresario plays his part against the other party, the singer or the scenographer, with whom he creates what the author calls «An Artistic Conflict».

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R. W. HOULE, (ed.), *The Estates of the English Crown 1558-1640*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. XVIII-440.

The Modern Age has seen significant changes in both the amount of property owned by the English Crown and the way in which it was managed. Historiography on the subject has often dwelt at length on the former aspect, whereas the latter has been examined only superficially, or indeed totally neglected.

The papers in this book, as Richard W. Hoyle points out in the Introduction, share the common intention of not entirely contradicting the results of former research, but of presenting a more complex and at the same time a more authentic picture of the evolution of English Crown estates in the

Modern Age. In this sense, the greater attention given to the working of the administrative structure and the changes therein throws new light on the sales procedure which was the main feature of this period.

The period chosen was one of great innovations in the administrative organisation of the Crown estates. Towards the mid-sixteenth century, the Exchequer, headed by the Lord Treasurer, became the most important institutional body: from 1554, this office dealt with income which had been previously administered by the Court of Augmentation, including legacies or gifts, and income from property confiscated with the suppression of the monastic orders. The acquisition of new income sources did not cease. As Richard W. Hoyle points out, the Crown possessions were in constant evolution: the property of those who died without an heir or property which was confiscated went to the Crown. This was also a period when a great deal of property was sold, although the sales did not procure the capital the Crown required, mainly because would-be buyers lacked ready money. And so there was a pressing need to administer estates which had suddenly become not only greater in size but also more scattered throughout the various counties and in need of constant updating in order to facilitate the management and make it ever more efficient and rational. It was no accident that these years saw the beginning of an intense debate on the management of Crown estates, and it was urged that peripheral bodies be created which were real «points of contact» between Westminster and the provinces.

Indeed, this debate aroused greater interest in the administration of Crown property. As David Thomas shows, when Elizabeth I became Queen, the total income from land amounted to about £. 86,000 per year, i.e. about 30% of the total income administered by the Crown. Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, income from land had reached £. 111,000 i.e. about 34% of total income. This increase is particularly significant if connected with the fact that during Elizabeth's reign there was a sudden increase in the sale of lands, a sale necessary to fund wars. However Thomas maintains that it was merely an apparent improvement: the increase in revenue, in fact, was largely due to a considerable reduction in pensions payable to former monks and nuns and to the confiscation of many lands belonging to rebels. In these same years, the need was felt to start to survey and record all property belonging to the Crown: hence the creation of «surveyors» in the various places where Crown property existed.

The enquiry into the Duchy of Cornwall, whose income went to the heir to the throne, came to different conclusions. The Exchequer's policy regarding the Duchy, as described by Graham Haslam, was one of substantial immobility until the crisis of 1590, a year in which an important number of sales took place, again to fund wars.

Madeleine Gray believes that the last quarter of the sixteenth century was a period of radical changes in sales procedure for Crown lands. During this period a group of agents appeared who were very interested in the property put on sale by the Crown and offered their services as intermediaries or as direct

purchasers. Madeleine Gray's analysis in her paper on property administration in Wales is significant. The Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543 brought about radical changes in Wales with the creation of new administrative and judicial offices, although that did not necessarily mean that Wales was simply absorbed into the English administrative system.

David Thomas' paper concentrates on procedures for the leasing of Crown estates during the reign of Elizabeth I. As was the case with sales, leasing commissions did not manage to increase income significantly, mainly because few checks and little updating meant that only scanty information on the quality and quantity of the lands to be leased was available. «Customary tenures» shared the same fate: Richard W. Hoyle shows how in this case, too, actual income was progressively eaten away by the rate of inflation which was decidedly higher than the slight increases in rents.

The same Richard W. Hoyle reconstructs the administration of the estates between 1598 and 1640. In this case, too, an increase in income was aimed at, mainly by stricter checks on the people who administered the lands at a local level. These new, stricter measures brought appreciable results, but did not lead immediately to a marked increase in income: the idea was still prevalent that it was very much easier to sell land rather than obtain appreciable improvements in management by managing the land directly or by the practice of leasing.

Joan Thirsk further investigates reform and management plans. What began to be defined as «projects» during Elizabeth's reign and became real slogans in James I's reign, aimed to discover, through constant, stronger action, Crown property illegally held by individuals, or to recover arrears. In this sense, there is a clear line of continuity between the reigns of Elizabeth and James; James took up the plans which Elizabeth had put into practice and he carried them out on a broader scale and in a more precise manner.

The last two papers by Richard W. Hoyle and Peter Lange are about the complex subject of the administration of woodlands. In terms of income, these could be considered dead weight, and indeed expenditure was multiplied by the necessity of continual investments for their everyday upkeep. On the other hand, woodlands were considered an integral part of the monarchy, and this explains why deforestation did not begin until about 1625, although it had been talked about sooner. From 1625 onwards, again forced by the Crown's pressing financial needs, deforestation became an absolute necessity in that it could secure considerable, immediate earnings, while at the same time eliminating ever-increasing expenditure for upkeep.

Richard W. Hoyle's final conclusions seem pertinent, especially when he attempts to give an overall interpretation of the various research projects we have mentioned. We find the theory convincing that from Elizabethan times a commercial outlook and a definite desire to rationalise and modernise Crown estate management developed. The connection between trends in agricultural economy and the chronological periods in which revenue from Crown lands was increasing seems opportune to the point that Hoyle states that the Crown was

only a generation behind the most advanced category of English landowners in adopting business criteria in the administration of their lands. However Hoyle adds that the continual recourse to sales, mainly because of the pressing war requirements of the time, eliminated any hope of improving estate management. And war requirements, or rather the priorities of war in that period, help us to a better understanding of the eventful context of the English Crown's action towards the administration of its estates.

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INSTITUTE OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN STUDIES, *Islam and Finance*, Singapore, 1991, p. XV-306 (Torino, Fondazione Agnelli);
IDEM, *The State and the Economy in the Arab World*, Singapore, 1993, pp. IX-183 (Torino, Fondazione Agnelli).

The modernisation of the economy in the Arab world which began in the second half of the nineteenth century broadly coincided with the attempts at Westernisation on the part of the colonial powers and the Ottoman Empire. Only after the second world war have Islamic revival movements gradually introduced into the Arab countries, and those areas with a heavy concentration of Muslim communities, forms of economic activity, especially banking, which could be practised respecting the Koran's precepts. In parallel, with the end of the colonial era, an overall economic development plan for the Arab world has been pursued, which was to be carried out through integration of and cooperation between the region's richer and poorer areas. This was to be achieved, first, within the broader project of building a single Arab nation and then, from the late 1970s onwards, with the creation of more homogeneous sub-regional units.

It is important to further our knowledge of these aspects of the Arab world's contemporary history, not only to give an overall picture of the region's economic development over the centuries, but also to enable us to forecast patterns of integration among the ever-growing Muslim communities which emigration flows are forming in the West. To fulfil these two aims, the Agnelli Foundation in Turin has published two collections of studies by Arab scholars and experts belonging to the Muslim communities of South-East Asia: *Islam and Finance*, on the historical development of the Islamic banking system and its current practice, and *The State and the Economy in the Arab World* which focuses on the various attempts at inter-Arab cooperation over the years and on the role the State has played in the region's economic development.

The State and the Economy in the Arab World, which also provides a general reference framework for the other collection of studies, begins with a paper by

Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil on the process of the Arab world's economic integration to the end of the second world war, with special attention to the role played by the Arab League. This broad historical perspective provides the backdrop to the other authors' papers and for an analysis of future development prospects. The other papers deal with the transition from the inter-Arab cooperation project to the setting up of sub-regional economic bodies, the privatisation processes of the 1980s and the role of the State, after the end of the colonial period, with the emergence of nationalism and Islamism.

The constitution of the Arab League in 1945 paved the way for cooperation among the Arab states and coordination of the region's economic policies¹. The Arab League was created to oppose the unionist and federalist approach to Arab nationalist aspirations. In its charter it declares its commitment to promoting inter-Arab trade and expresses the need for member-states to standardise legislation related to agricultural and industrial development, the development of transport, and the movement of goods and capital, without however limiting each country's autonomy in determining its own economic and financial system.

After the Arab countries' defeat in the war against Israel in 1948, the League promoted the stipulation of an agreement on common defence and economic cooperation which was signed in 1950, and the founding of a supreme economic council, which met for the first time in 1953. The revival of Arab nationalism after Nasser's coming to power in Egypt led to the moderate Arab countries' intensifying their efforts to boost economic cooperation in the early 1960s, and in 1964 the treaty for Arab economic unity came into operation. The Six Days War in 1967 brought a decisive change in the region's internal equilibrium, and the decline of Nasser's plan for Arab unity was responsible for the rapprochement between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the two main antagonists during the period from 1955 to 1966.

In the two decades following the 1960s, the Arab League, which had started as a front consisting of moderate countries, gradually became the Arab states' major representative body, despite the many periods of international tension, especially during the Kippur War (1973), the signing of the Camp David treaties (1977), and the recent Gulf War (1990-1991). Today the Arab League includes all the Arab nations of the Maghreb and the Middle East, except Iran; the reaching of an agreement between Israelis and Palestinians on the occupied territories and the multilateral peace treaty which has accompanied the agreement seem to have broadened even further the field of application of agreements between Arab countries.

The widening of the front of countries supporting the economic cooperation project has given birth to new structures, including the Organisation of Oil-Exporting Arab Countries (1968), the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (1972), the Arab Monetary Fund (1977) and the

¹ On the role played by this organisation, see A. Samir, *The Arab Nation*, London 1978.

Arab Organisation for Industrial Development (1980). As well as being discussed in the permanent bodies created for that purpose, aspects of inter-Arab economic cooperation have been discussed during the meetings of Arab League heads of state and governments. The summit held at Amman in November 1980 was the first of this new type of meeting to discuss exclusively economic matters, and more specifically the role of oil within a common growth strategy and policies necessary to narrow the disparities in development, both between one country and another and within individual nations. Such differences had always existed in the region, but had become more marked after the oil boom.

Despite the excellent analysis made at the Amman meeting, the initiatives approved by the summit were limited in scope and provided for an overall joint investment of not more than five billion dollars over a ten-year period. The divergence of interests between oil-exporting countries and non-exporting countries over the use of financial surpluses prevented wider goals from being reached; according to the non-exporting countries, reduced financial liquidity in the immediate future on the part of the exporting countries would have been more than recompensed by mid to long-term benefits deriving from the region's economic development, like self-sufficiency in food, the diffusion of modern technologies, production diversification, etc.

During the 1980s, the oil-exporting countries' substantial refusal of this strategy led to a slowing down in the implementation of inter-Arab development projects, whilst the position of the poorer countries, which have shown limited ability to propose valid, financially viable projects, has become further weakened by the increase in foreign debt. Fathallah Oualalou points out in his paper that, in the same period, the initiative to continue cooperation was no longer taken by economic bodies supported by all the Arab states, but by bodies representing more homogeneous sub-regional groupings, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (1981) and the Arab Maghreb Union (1989). The Arab League was now only an arena where the different development policies implemented in the region were discussed and compared.

The Gulf Cooperation Council has achieved good results in coordinating the trade policies of member-states, balancing the terms of trade, strengthening collective bargaining power, particularly in the oil market, and reaching an agreement on the minimum customs tariffs applicable to products from non member-states. However, increased commercial cooperation amongst member-states of the Council has led only very minimally to more openness towards the surrounding area. This is shown by the fact that the Council countries have assigned no more than 7% of their total investments to the rest of the region, and have not agreed on a preferential tariff treatment for the other Arab countries.

And so the crux of the problem of integrated Arab development lies firstly with the willingness of capital-exporting countries, i.e. oil-producing countries, to invest in the region, accepting a poorer performance in the immediate future

in exchange for future benefits in cooperation, and secondly, with the ability of countries requiring capital to present themselves as reliable commercial and financial partners. Both these aspects are linked to two factors which are essential in understanding the economic development of the Arab countries: the role played by the state and the history of the creation of the banking system.

Concerning the first point, Nazih Ayubi's paper recalls that in most Arab countries in the 1960s and the 1970s, bureaucracy and the economic and social role of the state grew. On the contrary, from the mid-1980s, a wave of privatisation and economic liberalisation overtook the Arab world; in countries more open to western influence this wave was prompted by directives issued by the International Monetary Fund and by changes in leading development models at an international level; in countries more linked to the Arab socialist experience it was a consequence of the decline in ideologies which favoured a planned economy.

But beyond appearances, the privatisations carried out in the Arab world have had only a small impact, even allowing for the fact that they have occurred in developing countries or countries of recent industrialisation². The lack of national middle-classes is partly responsible for the fact that privatisations in this region have failed to contribute to a dynamic process of development supported by the market economy, and are still the result of a policy imposed on governments because of chronic budget deficits, and the impossibility of sustaining nationalisation-type policies.

In other words, growth in the private sector may be the result of a lack of alternatives, even though its scale, its characteristics and its timing may all vary, depending on many factors, such as government stability, unity and autonomy in decision-making. Abdelbaki Hermassi's paper focuses mainly on the Maghreb situation, and helps us to a better understanding of the complex equilibrium out of which the Arab State has burgeoned: on the one hand, most Arab states have emerged from the colonial order and have consolidated their own internal structures by putting the emphasis on nationalism; on the other hand, their legitimacy has constantly been questioned, first by the ideologies of pan-Arab unionism and, more recently, by the revival of extremist Islamic movements.

Concerning the second point, the creation of a banking system in the Arab world, the papers in *Islam and Finance* describe the process which, after the second world war, led to the gradual introduction of forms of economic activity while still respecting the precepts of the Muslim religion, with particular reference to the countries of South-East Asia. The Koran forbids categorically the payment of interest, and prohibits any form of repayment which exceeds the amount loaned, irregardless of the purpose of the loan. However, profit from commercial activity and the practice of *mudaraba* is deemed legitimate. The

² See on this P. Cook - C. Kirkpatrick (eds.), *Privatisation in Less Developed Countries*, Wheatsheaf Books, Sussex, 1988.

mudaraba is a fiduciary contract in which one party provides the capital and the other party the labour, but, in the case of failure, the party that provided the capital loses his money without any possibility of redress against his partner.

The Islamic banking system is based on a double *mudaraba* contract drawn up by the bank with the depositors and with those who use the money: instead of interest, clients receive a share of the company's profits. The first experiment of a bank founded on this principle was in Egypt in 1963. Its success led to this type of bank rapidly becoming widespread throughout the whole of the Middle East, in North Africa and in South-East Asia, even in those countries where the Muslim population is in the minority, such as the Philippines or Thailand. In strongly integralist countries such as Iran, Pakistan and Sudan, the entire banking system has been changed so that no interest is paid.

Later theoretical studies by jurists and economists have increased the range of services offered by the Islamic banking system, while the 1970s' oil boom provided the capital necessary to increase its turnover. In 1975 the first Islamic international financial institution was founded, the Islamic Development Bank, which aims to encourage economic development and social progress in Islamic countries and communities. In 1977 an international association of Islamic banks was founded to promote cooperation among them and to coordinate their activities. In 1978 the first Islamic bank in the West, the Islamic Financial House, opened in Luxembourg to improve contacts with European and American financial centres. By the mid-1980s, there were more than sixty banks of this kind.

The papers in *Islam and Finance* describe a process which, despite having begun in recent times, seems to be expanding rapidly. However, as M. Pacini points out in the preface, the authors of the papers do not hide their doubts about the possibility of long-term success for the Islamic banking system. Such doubts stem not so much from the many technical problems the system poses, as from the fact that banking activity which is based not on the payment of interest on capital but on a share in profits, requires a socio-cultural context which not all the Islamic countries appear to have.

Furthermore, going back to the problem of cooperation, despite the aims declared, the Islamic banking system until now has not provided a decisive contribution to the overall development of the Arab world, because, on account of the high-risk nature of the *mudaraba* contracts on which they are based, Islamic banks generally tend to invest in short-term projects, such as the purchase of raw materials or import-export operations, whereas the region needs above all medium to long-term infrastructural investments.

These two volumes give the reader a complete picture of the history and the present situation of the economy in the Islamic countries, as well as a very comprehensive bibliography which western scholars will find of great value. However, if we consider the subject from a historical perspective, we might argue that some of the factors responsible for slowing down a common process of development have been neglected in many of these papers. On the one hand,

during these years the pressure of the Maghreb countries to steer their own economic and commercial development towards the Mediterranean and the European Community seems to be very strong³, whereas in the opposite sphere, Iran is working to form a pan-Islamic group with the Islamic republics of the ex USSR and potentially with Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan to which she can extend her own political and economic hegemony in opposition to the moderate Arab front. At the same time, the influence of the Islamic integralist movements (present to a lesser or greater degree in many Arab countries) on the development process should not be underestimated⁴. Here, once again, the books under review are very useful in helping us to understand these forces.

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H. POHL (ed.), *Europäische Bankengeschichte*, Frankfurt a. M., Fritz Knapp Verlag, 1993, pp. 735.

With this book, the *Institut für bankhistorische Forschung* (Institute for Banking History) carries out an ambitious and original project: a history of banking in Europe from the Middle Ages to the present day, or rather, a European history of banking, which shows how sensitive historians are to the prospect of much greater integration among the nations of the Old Continent as this millenium draws to an end. It is an impressive work and, for at least two reasons, an innovative one: first on account of the timespan referred to, and second on account of the size of the geographical area examined (every country in Western Europe is included in the study).

The result is an extremely useful book, with contributions by eminent scholars such as Büschgen, Bonin, Cottrell, Luigi De Rosa, Hans and Manfred Pohl, Tortella and Van Der Wee. It is an ideal reference book for all specialists. However, such a wide-ranging work must inevitably suffer from the specific nature and the limits of its subject matter; the history of banking has only recently become an independent discipline within economic history, specialising in contemporaneous problems. In fact there is a certain discontinuity between the first two parts which deal with medieval and modern times, and the rest of the book. The preface itself, written by Hans Pohl and Gabriele Jachmich, is

³ On this, with particular reference to the problems of food supply, see the papers collected in CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE - ISTITUTO DI RICERCHE SULL'ECONOMIA MEDITERRANEA, *Food Policy and Economic Development in Mediterranean Arab Countries*, edited by A. Montanari, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993.

⁴ On the revival of Islamic fundamentalism, see the papers published in *Limes - Rivista Italiana di Geopolitica* 2, n. 2/1994.

concerned above all with the history of contemporary banking, of which it gives a useful synthesis, preceded by an outline of the history of banking historiography.

M. Körner is the author of the paper on medieval banking. In this paper Körner defines trade areas, traces the embryo of a European market, describes the characteristics and development of money, and analyses the forms of financial mediation from small credit transactions to the activities of big bankers. Houtmann-De Smedt and Van der Wee's paper on the modern age may be considered a thorough updating of Van der Wee's now classic paper published in the *Cambridge Economic History*, whose general principles it follows. The authors examine the setting up of public pawn-shops, the growth of both public and private deposit and circulation banks in the sixteenth century, trade fairs, bankers in the service of French and Hapsburgian politics, changes in the banking system between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and the introduction of long-term state credit.

The greater part of the book is concerned with the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The lay-out changes too: for every period examined, a general essay introduces sections on individual countries. For the «long» nineteenth century (until the first world war), a paper by K. E. Born focuses on monetary and currency problems, picking out three fundamental aspects: the constitution of the gold standard within a context of exchange price stability and increasing international trade; the circulation of bank-notes in connection with the rise of the central issuing banks, the development of non-monetary means of payment.

A broad study by Hans Pohl draws a specific analysis of the early nineteenth century, an often neglected period in the history of banking, despite its crucial importance for the understanding of the origin of the banking system as seen today. It is a transition period in which the old typology of credit (based on the dual concept private bankers/public banks) was still largely predominant. However, new structures, such as savings banks, rapidly became widespread almost everywhere in Europe (Southern Italy is a notable exception). Engendered by philanthropical concerns and encouraged by the enlightened elite of Europe, savings banks were run by private individuals in England and by local administrations on the continent. Germany was one of the first countries to set up mortgage loans and land credit. Furthermore, increasing state intervention in the issue of currency and the development of public institutions such as the Bank of England and the *Banque de France* were important factors in the creation of central banks.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the European banking system experienced a period of growth which is only partly linked to the industrialisation process. It must be emphasised that the specificity of the nineteenth-century phase, and especially the early nineteenth-century phase, cannot be explained in terms of an alliance between industry and banks. After all, if we look at the English Industrial Revolution, banks, and especially big banks, can take no credit

for financing the manufacturing sector which, while going through a phase of profound technological renewal, did not require large initial capital investments. At the most, the role of the country banks in England may be stressed.

However, it remains true that the economic debate in Europe became heated at the prospect of industrialisation, and plans were made for a new bank. The most notable case is the influence of Saint-Simonian ideology on Laffitte's projects (the *Société Générale du Belgique* and the *Caisse Générale du Commerce et de l'Industrie in France*).

The period from the mid-nineteenth century until the first world war was the period of industrial take-off for many European countries, and the relationship between banks and industry is one of the most important aspects of the path pursued by latecomer nations. Gerschenkron's now classical theories have been widely confirmed and echoed in later literature, as the papers in this book show. M. Pohl outlines an exhaustive synthesis on «banking systems and the concentration of banks from 1850 to 1918». It was a period of dramatic changes, and the term «concentration» is perhaps the most indicative. The huge process of concentrating banks was seen above all in continental Europe.

Private banks became, often through merger mechanisms, joint-stock banks, and therefore universal banks. The first transition was common to both continental Europe and England, where joint-stock banks soon became widespread. However, the English system remained subdivided in specialist banks and anchored to short-term credit, whereas universal banks became the norm on the Continent. In France, in the mid-nineteenth century, big banks sprang up: the *Crédit Mobilier*, the *Crédit Lyonnais*, the *Société Générale*. Banks were very much involved in the development of heavy industry and in the public works sector, above all in railways.

However, it was in Germany that the model of the universal bank and the concentration process were most prominent, and German historiography is the most sensitive to these problems, as was seen in the recent debate on *Organisierter Kapitalismus*. The universal bank proved a powerful ally of an industrialisation process which required ever-greater initial capital and investments, but the very degree of its involvement made it a fragile organism, as the recurring crises of the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century show. De Rosa points out in a well-detailed paper how Italy had a similar experience: the banking crisis of 1873 was followed by the setting up of new banks and by mergers in which the *Banca di Roma* too has its origins. At the end of the century, industrialisation was given a substantial boost by the founding of banks (the most representative case being the *Banca Commerciale*) with a considerable sum of foreign capital, especially German capital.

Banking history from the mid-nineteenth century until the first world war is however influenced by other factors: as savings banks continued to gain ground (with competition from postal savings banks) and institutions such as mortgage banks, mutual savings banks and mutual-loan societies became more widespread, banking reached ever-wider sectors of the population. At the same time, paper

money and bank cheques were used on a larger scale. This was a marked change from the past: the diffusion of forms of payment other than metallic money necessitated an ever more marked regulatory presence of the State. Thus the huge expansion of the banking system, both in quantity and quality, in this period took place under increasing State influence, especially as far as the ratio between metal reserves and bank-notes was concerned. However, this is not to deny the driving role of the banks in industrial development which took place in a situation of stability in foreign exchange and with a well-balanced, functioning gold-standard.

The period between the first and second world wars was one of uncertainty and instability with many monetary and banking problems. H. James gives an account of the research done on this difficult period which has produced a copious amount of printed matter in recent years. Inflation in the immediate post-war years caused an increase in the rate of concentration of the banking system. There was a return to the gold standard, but in a situation of increased inequality amongst the countries. In this context, the 1929 crisis originated as debt deflation and spread rapidly in Europe and America because of the density of international financial connections. It was accompanied and made more acute by a profound crisis of confidence in monetary stability, in the strength of the financial system and in governments' ability to cope with the crisis.

The crisis hit the universal banks hardest, and gave rise to harsh criticism of the banking system which emphasised the necessity of a greater regulation of banking activity. A law was passed which limited the banks' participation in industry. This led to the banks increasing their commitment to the public debt. That did not prevent an overall expansion of the banking system, through the constantly greater number of savers using institutions like small deposit banks, postal banks etc.

This increase is part of a long-term trend, lasting right through the century until the present day. The period between the two world wars was a crucial testing period for the new banking system which was being formed in the first half of the nineteenth century and became well-defined in the second half of the nineteenth century. The tendency towards concentration was another constant factor which the events following the second world war bear out, as Büschgen points out in his exhaustive paper. Throughout the various phases of the post-war period (reconstruction, the economic miracle, the Korean war, the oil crisis, the 1980s' recovery), the internationalisation of the banking system, the marked role of government regulation through the central bank and a more stable economic and financial situation are all seen to be basic trends. Recent years have witnessed a growth in European integration, both in terms of objectives and results; indeed this very book is itself a product of such integration and it is to be hoped that in the future European integration will continue to grow, creating stability and development.

COSTANZA D'ELIA

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G. ROSOLI (ed.), *Identità degli italiani in Argentina. Reti sociali, famiglia, lavoro*. With an introduction by L. DE ROSA, Rome, Edizioni Studium, 1993, pp. XV-404.

Five years after the publication of a miscellaneous work on Italy in Argentine society¹, G. Rosoli, co-editor of that book along with F.J. Devoto, has edited a new collection of essays on the identity of Italians in the same country. Just as the previous book focused on the origin of the Italian community in Argentina, these new studies enquire into the population and social trends of the community as well as into professional and political aptitudes, which are of great value in helping us to understand the complex features of the Rio della Plata country.

As L. De Rosa points out in the Introduction, this book owes much to the journal directed by L. Favero, *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*. Over the years this journal has contributed to widening the field of research about migration into the American sub-continent, with studies on its historical dimension and geographical distribution, the socio-economic aspects of human settlements in the migrants' home country and in the adopted country, as well as to disseminating new methodological approaches to these topics, bringing together studies conducted according to the chain migration model with more traditional analyses based on the push-pull model².

As is revealed in the sub-title, in this book the specific characteristics of the Italian community in Argentina are considered within the context of the family unit and the network of social relations which tie the individual to his surroundings, defined not only as the living or work place — the district, the factory etc. — but also in relation to the creation of workers' associations, to local élites and to the national political class. All these aspects reveal the decision to emigrate as part of family strategy. Such a strategy was worked out within a web of social interrelations between the place of origin and the place of arrival and once the destination had been reached, tended to transform these interrelations according to the new context.

An important point of interaction between the original characteristics of the immigrant community and the surrounding environment is discerned in an essay by E. J. Miguez on Italian marriage trends in Argentina. Initially endogamic ties prevailed but in the course of the twentieth century there was increasing exogamy. More generally, the subject of family ties is brought up repeatedly in all the essays on account of the central role played by the family in

¹ L.F. J. DEVOTO, G. ROSOLI (eds.), *L'Italia nella società argentina*, Rome, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1988.

² See for example D. ARMUS, «Diez años de historiografía sobre la inmigración masiva» in *Estudios Latinoamericanos*, December 1986, pp. 431-660, F.J. DEVOTO, «Los estudios sobre las migraciones europeas a la Argentina. Tradiciones historiográficas y problemas en debate» in AA.VV, *Studi sull'emigrazione. Un'analisi comparata*, Milan, Electa, 1991, pp. 117-148.

the process of the immigrant's settling down in the host society. In tracing the history of a large Italo-Albanian colony from Calabria, which settled in the town of Lujan, D.N. Marquiegui shows how the web of social relations originating in Italy was recomposed in the new country, such as homogeneity in the choice of living and working areas. This was due to the possibility of having ready access to the ownership of small plots of land in a given area of the town, where each family could settle, rear livestock, farm for subsistence and reproduce a way of living which was similar to the one abandoned overseas.

A very different situation is examined in the essay by D. Barrancos on Boca, a dock area in Buenos Aires. The censuses carried out between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century show that Italians coexisted with many other national groups, that they made up 54% of the resident population and that they were mainly owners of shops, artisans' workshops, small production units etc., alongside other categories employed locally such as clerks and skilled and unskilled workers, in the ports and local industry. But research on the Italian community in this area is not just concerned with professional or territorial identity but with defining the ways migrants adhered to ideologies regarding social transformation, support for religious institutions and the promotion of sanitary and moral rehabilitation, which were all evident and which provide us with interesting insights.

With the study by M.E. Ceva on Italian immigrants employed in a textile factory at Villa Flandria in the province of Buenos Aires, the focus of research moves away from the living district to the factory. Using documentation kept in the company archive Ceva reconstructs the occupational history of this community from 1924 to 1960 and shows how in this period the ways of selecting Italian workers changed radically as did the workers' attitude towards work. This was partly due to the new role taken on by trade unions and to changes in the Argentinian government's policy, and partly to the growth of migratory chains between the two sides of the Atlantic. The family and working environments were linked through workers associations which in the areas with a high percentage of immigrants resembled both co-operative societies and associations made up of members from the same ethnic group.

The role of Italian associations in Argentina, which had the highest membership figures, is described in the essays by A.E. Fernandez and A. Bernasconi. The first one, which focuses on the province of Mendoza in the period, spanning from the start of the migratory wave up to the 1930s, shows how on account of their ethnic nature, these organisations had an inter-class structure. This factor promoted homogeneity within the community and its social development but at the same time it put a brake on integration with local society and access to political power. On the contrary, in a social and economic context more favourable to the integration of Italian immigrants into Argentinian society, Bernasconi shows that in the migratory wave following the second world war Italian associations played — and continue to play — a role in safeguarding a common cultural identity.

Closely connected to the phenomenon of association-forming and thus to the reconstruction of a social identity for the Italians in Argentina, is the problem of assessing the role played by Italians in the creation of local and national political structures. In the case of local politics, the essay by C.F. Silberstein on the ruling class in the Italian community in the town of Rosario from 1860 to 1890, throws some light onto the subject. This group was made up of mainly tradesmen and industrialists who were tied to one another on account of their coming from the same region — Liguria — and through family ties. As for national politics, T. Di Tella assesses the role of the Italian community in relation to the more general impact mass migration had on the structure of Argentinian society. Di Tella shows that migration, which had a bigger influence here than in almost any other country, affected both the birth of Argentinean corporativism, understood as a means of political action and social pressure as an alternative to the party system, as a result of the initial exclusion of the immigrants from national politics, and also the country's urban and industrial development. Driven by the wish to gain social status and possessing technical know-how, the immigrants became the backbone of urban groups, the entrepreneurial middle class and the workers.

To give unity to the wide spectrum of subjects discussed here and to link them through a common methodological and institutional frame of reference regarding the identity of the Italian community, the book opens and closes with six essays which address problems related to the conceptualisation of immigration in Argentina and to a comparative analysis of the problem, to the role of migration policies in the origin and growth of this problem, as well as to the documentary sources available to scholars.

On the subject of mass immigration M.C. Cacopardo and J.L. Moreno have concentrated their analysis on the concept defined as the emigrant's «departure baggage», that is, all those work, personal and living experiences which the Italian brought with him to Argentina, and conversely on their «return baggage». The two authors point out that these concepts vary according to the geography of the emigrants's origins and destinations, showing that it is difficult to establish a simple relationship of complementarity between regions of origin and those of departure.

S. Baily's essay examines the differences in the way Italians settled in the host societies. Using economic activity, residence patterns and types of internal organisation as indicators of the extent to which immigrants adjusted, Baily compares Buenos Aires and New York, showing them as two extreme cases: in the first case the process of adjustment was rapid and complete, in the second it was slow and partial.

Using the same comparative method of analysis, F.J. Devoto examines Italian and Spanish emigration to Argentina. In particular he discusses the validity of applying a dualistic model for interpreting these phenomena which distinguishes between an early wave of emigration that was quantitatively limited but professionally more qualified and originating in the more developed

areas, and a second wave of mass emigration consisting mainly of non-skilled workers from the more backward areas of the country.

The detailed survey by L. Favero on the documentary sources available for studying migratory flows in Argentina — the lists of ships' passengers, the *Registro general de los inmigrantes*, the papers belonging to Argentine consuls in various countries etc. — enable us to establish more clearly both the channels of access to the country and the administrative procedures the emigrants had to go through and the way they evolved.

Completing the study of the institutional context of migration, are the two essays by M.I. Barbero and M.C. Cacopardo and by G. Rosoli. In the first, Barbero and Cacopardo show the scarce impact that post-war immigration policies had on regulating flows from Europe to Argentina, both as regards the attainment of quantitative and qualitative targets and the possibility of conveying immigrants through mechanisms of recruitment and assistance. On the contrary it was the role played by social networks and the conditions of the labour market which continued to affect migratory flows and job access in the host country.

Finally, G. Rosoli examines Italo-Argentine migratory policy in the aftermath of the second world war. These were important years owing to the institutional and political changes which occurred during the period in both countries and because of the long and drawn-out works of diplomacy being carried on in order to reach a final agreement. With the first five-year plan for economic development launched by Peron, Argentina hoped that immigration would bring skilled labour into the country thereby aiding the process of industrialisation, but at the same time there was a tendency to exercise political control over the immigrants. For their part the Italian government, on the one hand, looked favourably upon the resumption of overseas emigration considering the economic distress Italy was then suffering as a result of the war, but on the other hand it wished to have guarantees regarding the working and living conditions of Italians emigrating to Argentina.

Although Italy and Argentina signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1948, the agreements were left largely unfulfilled since, despite official intentions, the Argentine government pursued its own autonomous political aims which are reconstructed in the book with emphasis on the dense network of political and economic relations that characterised the period. In this way, too, we can see the rigorous philological approach adopted in this collection of essays edited by G. Rosoli which, as L. De Rosa points out in his Introduction, constitutes the most advanced stage of research on Italian emigration to Argentina in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

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J. ROSSELLI, *Il cantante d'opera. Storia di una professione (1600-1900)*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1993, pp. 305.

Following on from *L'impresario d'opera* (Turin, Edt, 1985), the publication of *Il cantante d'opera* was to be expected, continuing the author's wide-ranging, ambitious research project on the operatic theatre and its relationship with social-economic realities from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Compared to the first book, this volume is much more wide-ranging and detailed, even though it deals with a subject which at first glance may seem limited. Rosselli's study is a broad, detailed analysis of opera singers, a class commonly considered the butt of passions, the object of hero-worship, of fury and slander.

The adjective «great» is the natural attribute of a career that remains so, whether as a success or as an utter fiasco. As soon as one starts to read the book, it is immediately obvious that the opera singer is not so much a pretext as a starting point for a study that goes far beyond the class in question and goes on to address all the complex problems relating to the singers' lives. Their living conditions differed greatly according to their dependence on mean relatives and deceitful protectors, on patrons and on the market; their salaries were often far too high or far too low.

An economic and social historian, Rosselli has specialised in music and has developed the instruments and methodology for a qualitative-quantitative study of the musical world in Italy and Europe. His book is a fundamental contribution to our knowledge about the life, work and often complex personality of opera singers from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

Particular attention is paid to that most gossiped about category of the virtuosi rabble: the *castrati*. It is remarkable how swiftly and easily and elegantly the author writes about the world of the *castrati* which has yet to be thoroughly investigated by musicology and which for a long time has been embarrassingly and wrongly considered a legend of the Neapolitan *conservatori* (orphanages). Although not very lengthy, the section on *castrati* is exhaustive and raises many discussion points. It contains eye-witness accounts and socio-economic considerations, and includes a mild attempt to psycho-analyse the eunuch.

The book's interest lies not only in the various aspects of the soprano's career, but also in the detailed depiction of the context in which the singer performed. The choices of the parents of children «offered up» to music through the atrocious practice of eviration as an investment for the professional future of their sons, the interferences on the part of music teachers and doctors trained in these routine surgical operations, the mediation of the impresarios and the theatre managers, the relationships between Popes who were opera enthusiasts and *castrati* chapel choir members, all these aspects show how chapel choirs, orphanages, schools and theatres were run, as well as throwing light on the negotiations to engage singers, on production problems and interference from censorship and on political and institutional measures.

Impresarios often complained about the singers behaviour. Caffarelli, for example appears as «an ignorant and coarse *castrato*, a quarrelsome exhibitionist» (p. 67). Singers squabbled with each other and in the nineteenth century sometimes the monarch himself intervened as arbiter. Until now the portrait of the opera singer has been a sort of «biography» based on a small number of definite facts and on a large number of witticisms, on a musical corpus, which was not very well known and which was subject to aesthetic prejudices; both the few facts and the many witticisms were complementary and in perfect agreement with the desires of both admirers and disparagers. This fleeting patchy picture is confirmed in some of Rosselli's previous sporadic publications.

However in this book, the Anglo-Italian historian sets out to rectify the usual image of the opera singer by using widely-documented research from a huge variety of sources: letters, memoirs and accounts of contemporaries, magazines of the period, news passed on by travellers, but above all «engagement» contracts and receipts of payment.

Rosselli's analysis is based on an interesting parallelism: a comparison of the fees paid in some of the most important theatres in the eighteenth century. On a technical level it is worth noting that the author has chosen to quote the monies paid in Italy between 1800 and 1914 in French francs since the lira of both the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy and unified Italy was equal to the franc. Monies paid in Italy in the eighteenth century are also quoted in francs so that a comparison may be made. Of course it is difficult to make comparisons over four centuries during which not only the monetary reference changes but also the value of wages and fees.

«It is significant that in 1700 there was still no standard practice applied to salaries in opera houses. It is true that fees were not the only means of reward since they could be supplemented by payment in kind but such a wide range of fees indicates that no-one knew exactly what to ask» (p. 103). Rosselli continues «as though it were believed that fees were fixed not to much by a generally recognised practice as by the status of those who were paying» (p. 103) and by the creation of an economic bond and a more personal bond between actors and public, expressed in the so-called «beneficiate» (benefit performances).

Contracts evolved when cash payments were introduced but until the mid-seventeenth century they were brief and mentioned neither the work to be performed nor the dates of performance (the season was always Carnevale, mid-January to Shrove Tuesday). Contracts did not state what measures would be taken in the case of war, epidemics or state intervention. From the mid-eighteenth century until the first world war singers drew up their contracts with the determinant mediation of the impresarios. However over the same period in Venice, singers dancers and musicians set up *impresie a carato*. This kind of association guaranteed the company the running of a whole season and a quota (*carato*) for each member.

With the advent of the opera market singers were defined as «merchandise». About 1750 singers were generally paid in cash, but with payments falling due at different times (seasonally, monthly or at each single performance). Adam Smith attributed the opera singers' «exorbitant recompenses» to their «rareness» and to the «fascination of their talents». In fact, Rosselli shows how the overpaid singer has long been a commonplace, but that not all salaries were so «exorbitant». Even the opera economy has its market rationality and shows a wide range of levels, some being very low. «In its own way the market dictates that an important singer is six times more difficult to replace than a cabinet minister» (p. 154).

Rosselli's study is the result of very thorough research that has been carried out over a long period of time. Rosselli draws on his previous research experience on the theatrical professions during which he considered a host of social, economic and musical problems. Such experience has proved indispensable in writing this book which is a milestone among the studies on the operatic theatre and its unmistakable protagonists.

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A. SEGRÈ, *La rivoluzione bianca. Processi di decollettivizzazione agricola in Russia, Paesi Baltici, Cina, Albania*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1994, pp. 326.

For many generations the Soviet solutions adopted in agriculture (the Red Revolution) were considered as a corner-stone; a positive one from the Eastern perspective and a negative one from the Western view. However, having deep roots in the period before 1917, the Soviet model in agriculture reflects a long evolutionary process during which different solutions were adopted. In the first part of his book, the author demonstrates that the failure of the measures adopted stemmed from one basic cause, i.e. the wish to transpose economic and social models borrowed from ideologies and experiences originated in the Western world without any regard for the peculiar conditions of the country. Systematically, the transplanted models were rejected. Yet, the effect of these operations was to alter the equilibrium of agriculture: this sector suffered from diverse and sometimes traumatic adjustments. Moreover, the adopted solutions had another common feature: their imposition from above.

Recognition of both these aspects enables the author to interpret the principal phases of Russian and Soviet history which are each linked to a particular model: the 1861 emancipation to the Malthusian model; the 1905 revolution and agrarian reform correspond to the Stolypin model; the 1917 revolution and the NEP partly to the Marxist model and partly to the unexpressed model of Chayanov; the collectivisation at the end of the 1920s leads to the Soviet model; the post-war industrialisation takes us into the 1970s,

to the agro-industrial model; Gorbachov's revolution of the mid-1980s' represents the first step toward the adoption of a market model. With the dissolution of the USSR, in the 1990s the former-Soviet republics and other «socialist-oriented» countries sought independent solutions to the problems posed by the failure of the Soviet model. This process led to the decision to decollectivise agriculture: a radical change has then taken place in the sector.

The second part of the book examines the solutions adopted by single countries to solve the problem of post-Soviet agriculture. As an outcome of the author's field experience, four cases of de-collectivisation are investigated: Russia, the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, China, and Albania. The author sets out to identify common characteristics of the ongoing processes: the origin of the solutions adopted (endogenous or exogenous), the push (from above or from below), the intensity of de-collectivisation and obstacles to its implementation. In this historical and comparative perspective, the author is able to draw several conclusions that help to gain greater insight not only into agricultural de-collectivisation but also into the processes of transition from a planned to a market economy.

In the transition to the new market economy model the countries of a centrally planned regime lose their system's defining characteristic. They are now «new developing countries». They have broken with one ideological and political system but have yet to become full members of the other, which we may call the «world market». According to the author the historical legacy of Soviet-style socialism is an important fact. In dealing with the issues linked to this transition experts seem to lose sight of the store of knowledge accumulated heretofore by scholars of command economic systems. Moreover when called upon to advise the governments of these countries in transition, many Western economists, especially those from industrialised countries linked to international institutions, tend to see the formerly socialist economies as similar to others in developing countries — Second World equals Third World. Or, they are instinctively drawn to believe that the Western model can be successfully transplanted — Second World equals First World but some years behind it.

Yet these views do not take account of at least two important facts. The first is that no country follows a perfect model. Most of the capitalist democracies, for example, have made errors in their economic and agricultural policies: these developed nations do not seem to offer models deserving to be cloned elsewhere. Second, policies and institutions alike have undergone evolution and adapted themselves to a particular economic and agricultural environment: if transplanted they may be rejected by the intended host organism simply because they are incompatible with the substrata making up society.

It is not surprising, then, that after a quick start the process of agricultural reform in the cases surveyed has slackened its pace somewhat, albeit to varying degrees depending on the country. This is because in the transition stage, institutions, as well as the economic and social behaviour typical of socialist systems, are still very much alive.

The problems common to all the countries surveyed are imputable to the failure to define property rights and control mechanisms in agriculture, to the essentially hostile attitude to individual initiative by varying strata of society, to the generalised quantitative and qualitative lack of the technical means of farm production, to the lack of infrastructures and service needed by the new private farms and to the strict dependence (and not just economic) of the latter on public institutions.

The four de-collectivisation processes surveyed also make it possible to draw up a kind of classification. They can help to identify, on the one hand, the way and the pace of the development process, and on the other to assess the conditions that have determined the extent of its success.

Thus, in Russia, respecting the tradition of imposed exogenous models, the process of de-collectivisation was forced and slow. On the other hand in China, where the thrust for reform agriculture came from below and where the new conditions were not far from the peasant's culture, the process was spontaneous and accelerated. The Baltic case, though marked by a certain diversity depending on the country, represents an intermediate stage of de-collectivisation in that it is a process that first accelerated and then slowed down, even if it was essentially controlled from above from the very start. In Albania, in a reversal of Chayanovian's concept of *samo-kollektivizacija*, this process proved to be a kind of spontaneous and accelerated self-de-collectivisation.

There are three conditions needed for successful de-collectivisation: two are linked to the way the process is carried out and to the pace of reform and the other is a factor found within the system that has to be changed. The first is that the impetus towards agricultural de-collectivization should be spontaneous: laws must immediately follow ratifying, or regulating a situation which is already under way. The second is that changes introduced from the outside, besides being assimilated gradually, must also be few in number so that the rural culture can assimilate them. The third is to furnish the agricultural *nomenklatura* with adequate incentives by offering particularly favourable conditions for undertaking private farming. This is because the management of the former collective and state farms is the best trained, and encouraging this management removes an important economic obstacle (and not just a political one) to the reform process.

The stages of the transition process are linked to three necessary conditions, though not sufficient by themselves, to ensure the success of the process. The solutions adopted in a given country are viable only in so far as that specific case in concerned and, despite certain similarities, it cannot be extended to the others. One should not think that the Western agricultural model, which itself is not very uniform and stable, can be transplanted to the entirely different soil found in the countries emerging from Soviet-style socialism. That is, there is no such thing as a universal recipe for everyone, everywhere and at all times.

This is why the transition process in agriculture, as in the entire economy, is

foreseeably, long and unpredictable. It is not surprising therefore that the process of transition (or, if one wishes, of adjustment) in the market economic-agricultural systems is anything but completed. In other words this transition is transitory indeed and continuous.

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