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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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A. M. BERNAL, *La financiación de la Carrera de Indias (1492-1824). Dinero y crédito en el comercio colonial español con América*, Seville, Fundación EL Monte, 1992, pp. 763.

Who provided the capital which made possible not only the discovery and conquest of America but, above all, the exploitation of the resources that the New World supplied to the Spanish and European economy for more than two centuries? Were the gains proportionate to the investments and how were these shared out among bankers, shipowners, merchants, entrepreneurs and intermediaries?

Traditionally, Spanish historians studying the colonisation of America have paid little attention to such questions while much more attention has been paid to the methods and chronology of the conquest and political government of the New World. Yet right from the start, the Castilian monarchy rejected the Portuguese system of public monopoly over the fruits deriving from the conquest of the newly-discovered lands and placed the exploitation of the Indies entirely in the hands of private interest. Therefore in order to have a complete picture of the Spanish colonial experience we need to study the activity of men of diverse geographical and social backgrounds who, driven by the incentive to achieve high profits, financed the Atlantic trade and made possible the exploitation of the New World's resources.

In an attempt to answer the question as to how the Spanish colonial trade — the so-called *Carrera de Indias* — was financed, Antonio Miguel Bernal has produced his monumental study, published on the occasion of the quincentenary celebrations of the discovery of America, which have themselves been an important occasion for reflection among historians. The study is the fruit of many years' research which has been carried out largely in the *Archivo de Indias* in Seville, but also in other archives and libraries throughout Europe.

Bernal's book is fascinating both for the complexity and breadth of the issues examined. Compared to the paucity of the studies which have been produced up till now on the subject, Bernal provides a very careful and thorough analysis of traditional forms of shipping credit and the changes they underwent when trading interests shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, examining them from a legal point of view and in the light of problems posed by our knowledge of contemporary accounting methods and monetary circulation. These questions are treated in the first three chapters of the book

while the remaining three deal with: the finance mechanisms of colonial trade from the end of the fifteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century; the more intense and complex workings of the financial market in the course of the seventeenth century, with special emphasis on the role played by Seville; and lastly, the credit system and mercantile practices in the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a period when the historian's attention necessarily rests on the role of Cadiz.

According to Bernal, therefore, the crucial factor in the Indies trade is credit. Nonetheless, Bernal notes that, as in other sectors of the economy, in the credit sector, too, the discovery of America did not mark a break with old Andalusian maritime trading practices, which were based on rules recognised in all the European and Mediterranean markets and ports. Thus, although over time, trade with the Indies took on new dimensions, fundamentally it continued to rely on the most ancient instruments of European commerce: contracts of maritime exchange and maritime lending, also known as sea finance with risk money, consisting of a loan, usually granted for the duration of a single voyage, with surety on the ship, freight and cargo.

Private initiative combined the use of the ancient maritime loan — based on the high risk element of ocean voyages and the pressing need for credit — with more advanced accountancy methods and more complex forms of mercantile association. The American territories incorporated into the Castilian monarchy were first and foremost markets for commercial speculation, especially at times when quasi-monopolistic regimes set in; the prices of agricultural products and manufactures in colonial markets, often kept artificially high due to the insufficient or irregular supply of goods from Europe, compensated for the high risks incurred by operations of this kind.

At the same time, trade conditions in American markets depended on demand, which itself depended on the supply of precious metals. Excepting the amounts deducted by the Castilian monarchy in the form of tax levies, the total value of gold and silver bullion exports from America to Europe corresponded to the value of goods exported to America, less the financial costs incurred for obtaining credit and exchanging currency, and the costs of transport, insurance and financial mediation.

But trade remittances also influenced the pace of monetary circulation, since trade with the Indies did not only allow access to a substantial commodity trade but also ready access to supplies of monetisable precious metals. The premium on the value of money in the Indies compared to the Castilian currency, which initially stood at 29.4% and then at 33% and then in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth century fluctuated according to the monetary policies adopted by the government, was itself a sufficient inducement to the growth in trade credit to America.

Even when the opening of American mints made the legal value of money in the New World equal to the Castilian currency, in practice a double system of money circulation grew up between the mother country and the colonies which

provided extra opportunities for exchange earnings alongside the large profits deriving from ordinary trading activity. At the same time, other profits could be earned by exporting silver, given the permanent differential between gold and silver parities in Spain and in the other European markets.

As European economies demanded increasing amounts of bullion both for domestic currency and as a means to pay off trade deficits with the East, pressure for access to American remittances grew, as did non-Castilian participation in trans-Atlantic trade. This is another very interesting aspect of the research carried out by Bernal; the history of trade with America has either been interpreted from a purely hispano-centric stance which has emphasised the role of the Spanish people, or emphasising the role played by each of the other nations present. Bernal does away with national prejudice and shows how the men, capital and goods which for centuries made up the *carrera de Indias*, came from all over Europe and the Mediterranean and how the interests of people who were very different and distant from one another converged through the mechanisms of trade in such a way as has rarely occurred in history. Yet it was inevitable that this should be the case since the financial activity which grew up around trade with America conditioned the world credit system. The disproportion between the available means of payment and the enormous demand for goods from the colonial markets widened the sphere in which maritime loans were granted, increasing the overall demand for credit and diversifying the risks in order to serve both the monetary and capital markets efficiently at a crucial stage in the evolution of the modern capitalist system.

As the system evolved in response to the expansion of economies on both sides of the Atlantic, the system of maritime credit grew more complex in its practical application. Bernal shows how there was first and foremost a trend towards more transparent forms of mortgage loans and maritime bills of exchange, discountable, negotiable and subject to compensatory clauses. In Catholic countries, bills of exchange and maritime loans enabled people to elude the Church's censure of practices regarded as usurious; nonetheless, as the Atlantic trade grew, there was an increasing tendency to view the high interest rates on maritime loans — varying from between 60% to 90% — as perfectly legitimate, considering the fact that by accepting responsibility for the risk to the ship which acted as a guarantee for the loan, the creditor also performed the role of insurer.

The high interest rates on credit transactions in colonial trade, together with the high profits deriving from trade itself, made firstly Seville and afterwards Cadiz important financial markets in which citizens from all social groupings participated at various levels. In these towns a class of capitalists gradually emerged who, in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, changed from being mere buyers of gold and silver to become authentic bankers in economic relations with the Indies.

It is on the activity of these economic agents that Bernal focuses his attention. Following on from previous studies on bankruptcies in the *carrera de*

*Indias* from the sixteenth to nineteenth century and basing his research on trading accounts, Bernal reconstructs the role which debts and opportunities to accede to other sources of credit played in commercial bankruptcies. The frequency with which bankruptcies occurred in colonial trade led the *Consejo de Indias* and the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville to regulate very early on the financing of such trade with the provision of proper rules. Responsibility for these rules eventually passed into the hands of the *Consulado*, an institution whose very name was identified with the protection of monopolies in American trade.

At the end of the book there are six appendices — taking up over two hundred pages — with data on exchange contracts and maritime loans stipulated in Seville and Cadiz between the fifteenth and nineteenth century, which provide a rich and important store of information for anyone wishing to do further research on Spanish colonial trade. It is here that Bernal's research makes its valuable methodological contribution, since it provides a very broad and general picture within which more detailed and specific studies could be carried out. In conclusion, the book will continue to be an indispensable reference text for any scholar who intends to embark upon research regarding the complex affairs of the *Carrera de India*.

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S. CIRIACONO, *Acque e Agricoltura. Venezia, l'Olanda e la bonifica europea in età moderna*. Milan, 1994, 322 p.

Among the many recent works and articles on the history of water control, drainage, irrigation, embanking, etc., the book by the Italian historian S. Ciriaco is original by its comparative approach on a European scale. As indicated by the subtitle, not only does it illuminate the role of water — both by drainage and irrigation — in the history of Venice and its rural district, but also in large parts of the north Italian plain and even in Holland and other provinces of the Low Countries. Because the book highlights more particularly the technical aspects of water control, the role of the Dutch in this respect, not only in Holland itself and in the Venetian republic but also in other European regions like Northern Germany, France and East Anglia where they have been active in drainage and impoldering, is extensively studied.

As the book focuses on the history of the technique of water control in the early modern period both in its theoretical and practical manifestations, the sources used by Ciriaco mostly consist of printed material: on the one hand treatises and studies by contemporary authors, on the other the extensive historical literature on the subject mainly from the nineteenth and twentieth century. Ciriaco is well-acquainted with both types and his references are

numerous. The bibliography on the Low Countries and especially on Holland, which I can judge from my own experience, is almost complete and up to date. Although most of the cited works and articles are written in Dutch, their use and interpretation is correct.

Ciriacono's book thus forms a rich source of information and is nearly encyclopaedic on these specialized matters. Still it is more than that: as the title and subtitle suggest, the author's most constant aim is to detect the link between the technical development on the one hand and the economic and demographic evolution on the other. In this way the author is explaining the role and use of water in drainage, irrigation and, to put it briefly, for land improvement in general. In this respect, the book is a substantial and original contribution to the economic history of Western Europe, particularly of Northern Italy and Venice in the early modern period.

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G. L. FONTANA, *Mercanti, pionieri e capitani d'industria. Imprenditori e imprese nel Vicentino tra '700 e '900*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1993, pp. 569.

With this accurate research full of documentary and iconographic material, G.L. Fontana has written a definitive history of industrialization in the province of Vicenza. A province that, as reported in contemporary events, is one of the most dynamic areas in the Italian industrial panorama and whose history the author has tried to trace back to the origins. The present author cannot but be pleased in seeing confirmed (see the author's *Echecs et réussites de la Proto-industrialisation dans la Venétie: le cas du Haut-Vicentin - siècles XVIIe-XIXe*, in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 1985) his interpretation of a regional area that, differently from other sub-regions of the Republic of Venice, was able to overcome the difficulties of the early nineteenth century and to establish itself from the second half of the nineteenth century as one of the first areas in Italy to experience an industrial development of a capitalistic nature. Fontana emphasizes the historic continuity of an entrepreneurial class that actually embodies the hypotheses of the proto-industrial model. In point of fact, the Rossi and the Marzotto, who from the mid-nineteenth century fully occupied pre-eminent positions in the Italian entrepreneurial class, had started their career as merchants-entrepreneurs in the woollen industry in the seventeenth century. One of the hypotheses of the «proto-industrialists», according to which industrial capitalism found in the 'putting-out-system' the preparatory phase for the following success of the factory system, is thus corroborated in the province of Vicenza. It is, however, true that such a peremptory conclusion needs some attenuation, since the various industrial systems followed multiple paths and were not always derived

from a single matrix. But it is also true that the concept of «primary accumulation of capital» in agriculture has to take into account a much slower evolution of the industrial system with roots in the complex relations between work at home and mechanization within factories. Furthermore, the province of Vicenza highlights the strength of a particular regional area, which exploited the abundance of water energy and mineral resources along with thriving sheep-raising and abundant labour to claim its industrial heritage towards both the capital, Venice, and the city of Vicenza, which had tried for a long time to control its territory.

However, environmental advantages do not always explain the success of an early and continued process of industrialization. The presence and effort of an entrepreneurial class is necessary in order to fulfill the ambitions that, totally unconsciously, it sets for itself. And it is this human-cultural-entrepreneurial variable that Fontana has focused on in this work, thus adding another piece to a history of the firm and of entrepreneurial enterprise which developed later in Italy compared with the experience of some other countries. Writing an entrepreneurial history is always likely to present difficulties for the historian: he must certainly highlight the entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit of the budding entrepreneur but, at the same time, he has to identify the sometimes equivocal links with the political world and record that success was sometimes helped by opportunism or the exploitation of a cowed labour force. Not by chance, some personages of the industrialization of the province have long been subject of lively debate in the ambit of a leftist historiography, which has emphasized the paternalism or the determinative political support of the government elite, with whom people like Gaetano Rossi and Gaetano Marzotto, members of the Royal Parliament, identified. Fontana, however, sets himself against this historiographic trend, centring his attention on the «soft transition» of this entrepreneurial class towards a capitalistic organization. Despite the inevitably celebratory style, the author substantiates his analysis with detailed research into the successful development of technical education, contacts with more advanced industrial areas (there is a close comparison with the Belgian woollen industry in the first decades of the XIXth century), and the evolution of the architectural and built environment.

The social and economic ascent of numerous entrepreneurs — from Sebastiano Bologna to Francesco and Alessandro Rossi, from Gaetano and Luigi Marzotto, in the woollen industry, to a whole group of pioneers in the most diverse industrial sectors — is thus integral with the «evolutionary dynamics of their firms», their «capability of adapting to productive changes», and their «process and product innovations». It would be too long to describe in detail both the «captains of industry» and the various manufacturing sectors. But what can be said is that in the case of the province of Vicenza this ability to establish mutual relations with each other based on the resources and raw material available, on the domestic and international market and on the interdependence of each branch of industry is striking. Apart from a basic will

to succeed, which has always been present — the manufacturing tradition in Vicenza goes back to the Middle Ages — the industrial momentum was sustained by new sectors coming forward when established industries no longer had the resources to sustain them. For instance, as the silver and lead mines became depleted in the XVIth century, the exploitation of kaolin, the fundamental raw material in the production of porcelain, soon began, with important developments in the XIXth-XXth centuries. Papermaking, present on the Riviera di Salò in the province of Brescia, established itself in the province of Vicenza (on the banks of the Astico) in the XVIIth century, changing to the factory system in the mid-nineteenth century (using wood from the Altopiano dei Sette comuni and forsaking the traditional use of rags). The town statutes denounced in 1490 the tanning of hides and the inevitable pollution of the streams. In the XVIIIth century about twenty active tanneries were present throughout the province of Vicenza, with a dramatic expansion in the last decades of the century. If the woollen industry represented the industrial core of the Alto Vicentino, especially with the big firms of Rossi and Marzotto in the mid-nineteenth century, silk and cotton production, a hemp mill, and the metallurgical, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and chemical-pharmaceutical industries followed.

The contemporary industrial scenario of this province confirms the importance of its manufacturing tradition and the fundamental influence it exercises.

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C. J. HERNANDO SANCHEZ, *Castilla y Napóles en el siglo XVI. El Virrey Pedro de Toledo: linaje, estado y cultura (1532-1553)*, introduction by L.M. Enciso Recio, Junta de Castilla y León, Salamanca, 1994, pp. 582.

Following on from the numerous essays he has already published on Pedro de Toledo and his era<sup>1</sup> and from the research carried out for his doctoral

<sup>1</sup> C.J. Hernando Sanchez, «Poder y cultura en el Renacimiento napolitano: la biblioteca del virrey Pedro de Toledo», in *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, n. 9, 1988, pp. 13-33; *Idem.*, «El virrey Pedro de Toledo y la entrada de Carlos V en Nápoles», in *Investigaciones Históricas*, n. 7, 1988, pp. 9-15; *Idem.*, «Idea y realidad de una corte periférica en el Renacimiento. Aproximación a la dialéctica público-privado del poder virreinal en Nápoles durante la primera mitad del siglo XVI» in *II Reunion Científica de Historia Moderna*, vol. II Mucsia, 1993, pp. 262-277; *Idem.*, «Concepción del gobierno y reforma del Estado en Nápoles bajo el virrey Pedro de Toledo», paper presented at the «Simposio Internacinal sobre organización del estado moderno y contemporáneo en Italia y España», Barcelona 1992; *Idem.*, «La vida material y el gusto artístico en la Corte de Nápoles durante el Renacimiento. El inventario de bienes del virrey Pedro de Toledo», in *Archivo Español de Arte*, n. 261, 1993, pp. 35-55.

thesis<sup>2</sup>, Carlos Jose Hernando Sanchez has produced a book in which he widens the field of his enquiry and through an analysis of the life and work of Pedro de Toledo provides a very detailed picture of the complex relations that existed between Castile and the Kingdom of Naples in the period of Spanish rule in continental South Italy, from the 1530s to the 1550s.

The first thing to say is that, with the exception of the essays by Del Moral and Pilati — both on the early period of Toledo's Vice-royalty<sup>3</sup> — this study on Pedro de Toledo fills a large gap in Italian sixteenth-century history. At the same time it is evident that the author has made a great effort to piece together the documentary evidence necessary for this research which he has collected from largely unpublished sources scattered in various public and private archives in Italy and Spain, whose access has not always been easy. Yet leaving aside the intrinsic difficulties in undertaking research on a subject which has not been widely studied and for which documentary evidence is very scattered and before considering the contents of Hernando's book, we should stress the effort made by Hernando to devise a methodological approach in his study of the Naples' Viceroy, an approach which Hernando alludes to the title of his book: *linaje, estado, cultura*.

The Viceroy embodied all the contradictions and conflicting influences inherent in the supra-national system of power created by the Hapsburg monarchy from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. In particular we can see how the whole administrative, military, political and economic structure of the state revolved around the Sovereign; but the Sovereign was absent and had a deputy in his Viceroy, torn between the prerogative of absolute power and obedience to the Crown. At the same time, while all the kingdoms were formally equal before the Hapsburg monarchy, Castile held supremacy over all of them and the Viceroy had the task of protecting the kingdom's independence and to act as a link between the directives of central power and the needs of local government.

As Vicens Vives has shown, right from the time of Ferdinand the Catholic, the Spanish monarchy sought to reconcile respect for the institutions belonging to subject nations with the state's ownership claims and with the full exercise of sovereign power<sup>4</sup>. Even when in the seventeenth century deep rifts undermined once and for all the equilibrium between the centre of the empire and the periphery and the need to maintain political and military control over the

<sup>2</sup> C.J. Hernando Sanchez, «Política de Estado, clientelas y cultura en Nápoles bajo el virrey Pedro de Toledo», doctoral thesis, supervised by Prof. Luis Miguel Enciso Recio, Facultad de Geografía e Historia, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. M. Del Moral, *El virrey de Nápoles don Pedro de Toledo y la guerra contra el turco (1532-35)*, Madrid, 1966; R. Pilati, «La politica amministrativa di Pietro di Toledo a Napoli (1532-36)» in *Archivio Storico per le Provincie Napoletane*, CVII, 1989, pp. 73-162.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Vicens Vives, *Aproximación a la historia de España*, Barcelona, 1952.

imperial possessions rendered the pursuit of reconciliation a secondary objective, it was the Viceroy who through his actions sought to reach an agreement with the local élites.

If this interpretation can be applied to the Hapsburg possessions as a whole in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Hernando's book shows that it is even more pertinent in the case of the kingdom of Naples where the Sovereign's supreme representative was required to act as a mediator not only between the centre of the empire and the periphery but also between the capital and the provinces of a kingdom whose parts were fairly loosely joined.

The Viceroys action in Naples was conditioned by a dual relationship between the centre and periphery: on one hand there was the need to accommodate the demands made by Madrid, while on the other hand there was the need to put forward a strong and coherent policy on behalf of the kingdom. Yet this double relationship itself contained another dualism: while on the one hand the Viceroy had to follow orders from Madrid and see that they were implemented in the kingdom, he was not a mere passive instrument and had a political plan of his own to carry out. On the other hand, in its dealings with the kingdom, the central power made a distinction between the capital and the provinces and the Viceroy had to take account of this in order to assert his rôle.

As Luis Miguel Enciso Recio points out in the Preface to the book, Hernando sets out to study the figure of the Viceroy reproducing the complexity of these relations through the concept of networks. He therefore analyses the political, social and family networks which bound the Viceroy on the one hand to the Madrid Court and to Castile and on the other hand to the institutions and groups which supported the monarchy inside the kingdom, above all in Naples. Yet Hernando goes beyond this interpretation and as a corollary to it he goes on to discuss the role of lineage.

The concept of lineage is a difficult one which is often limited to signify merely aristocratic descendants, but in this context its meaning is much more complex, embracing not only natural relatives and those acquired through marriage, but political and institutional relations deriving from patronage. Hernando points out that in sixteenth-century Italian and Spanish society, lineage was not just a means for passing on one's estate and one's name but conditioned one's very way of life: it implied a distinct system of values and way of behaving politically. Lineage conditioned the nobility from birth, heavily influencing their mentality and culture through family taste and provided the basis on which duties were performed to the Crown. Alongside religion and the monarchy, lineage was the dominant ideological and political convention in sixteenth-century society.

Pedro de Toledo embodied all these aspects, both as regards the centre-periphery relation and as regards the creation of a social, family and political network in Spain and in Italy, based on lineage. He stands out among other Viceroys in sixteenth-century Naples, not only on account of the

duration of his rule, but also because of the very scale of his political action which left its mark on the next century and a half of Spanish government in Naples.

Picking out the main features of his activity in South Italy, as described by Hernando, it is evident that Pedro de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca and a member of the Castilian nobility which had established its political power under Fernando the Catholic, was called to Naples (where he was Viceroy from 1532 to 1553) first and foremost to restore the Crown's authority over the barons whose bid for independence had been strengthened by the French invasion of Lautrec and by two years of unstable government under Cardinal Colonna. On the one hand, Pedro de Toledo showed great determination in his treatment of the aristocracy, not hesitating to bring to trial those who had committed both political and common crimes; on the other hand, he defined more clearly the role of the nobility in the military hierarchy, seeking to deploy the more unruly elements in military operations undertaken a long way from home, like the Tunis campaign of 1535.

At the same time Pedro de Toledo sought to strengthen the privileges and powers of the *università* (free towns or communes) against the claims of the feudal barons, and, in doing so, increased the central government's authority over local administration.

As regards the struggle to establish central authority over local power and his reform of the kingdom's administrative structure, Hernando distinguishes three phases in Pedro de Toledo's general political strategy. The first period, spanning from the time of his arrival in Naples and Charles V's visit in 1535-36, saw him gradually gaining territorial control, with the creation of an efficient defence system and the carrying out of major reforms especially in matters concerning the law. In the next decade, while still maintaining his control over the public administration and continuing in his policy of repressing his most hostile opponents, Pedro de Toledo began the political and social restructuring of the kingdom, including the execution of major public works. Finally, in the period beginning with the upheavals of 1537 up to the preparations for the War with Siena in 1553, Pedro's political actions were hampered by the climate of instability that had set in with the introduction of the Inquisition and by fears of a major Turkish attack along the coast and the possibility of being drawn into a war.

As regards the kingdom's military system, Pedro undertook to reform the kingdom's defences inherited from the Aragonese, whose weakness had been laid bare by the French invasion of 1528 and the renewal of Turkish hostilities at the beginning of the 1530s. Above all Pedro sought to create stable defences; while adopting special measures to deal with the fiscal problems faced by the *università* arising from the construction of military works, through the building of a string of fortresses along the kingdom's land and sea borders, he provided for a better organisation of troops and their more equal distribution. Yet while ascribing to the military a more active role in foreign defence Pedro did not

neglect its role in preserving law and order inside the kingdom and in quelling popular uprisings and rebellious barons.

Hernando shows that the reforms concerning defence, the army, relations between the central government, *università* and barons, which were carried out through a much sharper definition of the role of public administration and with greater attention to individual responsibilities in the distribution of office, were all part of the same plan to renew the state which Pedro had elaborated during his time as Viceroy but whose origins must be sought in his earlier political career.

It is particularly interesting — as far as the management of the kingdom's economy and administration is concerned — to examine the connection between government practice under Pedro while he was Viceroy in Naples and the period of his training. In this respect, his experience in administering the marquisate of Villafranca — to which he was appointed while still in his twenties and during which time he demonstrated his deep knowledge of local realities and his great capacity for balanced rule — is most significant. Again as Viceroy, Pedro considered it his first duty to understand the real situation of the kingdom and to keep the Sovereign closely informed, pointing out to him when requests for money by far exceeded the kingdom's real capacity to pay taxes.

Although he adopted various means to lighten the tax burden of the more heavily taxed *università*, showing concern for problems related to agriculture, trade and especially food provisioning, Pedro never shunned from obtaining «gifts» from Parliament which became more and more frequent and substantial as time went on, referring to the Sovereign only when it became impossible to comply with all the demands advanced by the Crown. Consequently, as far as finances were concerned, Pedro's Vice-Royalty was characterised by the need to find large sums in short periods of time, giving rise to a situation in which political power became closely entwined with economic power, which was mainly in the hands of the Genoese bankers. Indeed the personal financial situation of the Viceroy — who at his death left enormous debts — reflected the general conditions at the time.

Here, as more generally throughout the book, what emerges from Hernando's analysis of the Viceroy and his works is the difficulty in distinguishing the private from the public sphere. While Hernando declares his intention to examine more closely the economic and cultural aspects of the Vice-Royalty in a future study, nonetheless we ought to stress his important contribution to furthering our knowledge of Spanish and Italian history in the first half of the sixteenth century. In particular, Hernando has shown us that our understanding of the Hapsburg monarchy presupposes a careful analysis of its relations with the periphery.

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A. IZQUIERDO, ESCRIBANO, *La inmigración extranjera en España 1980-1990*, Madrid, Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1992, pp. 260.

In reading this book, it is necessary to give particular attention not only to the historical causes of immigration in Spain, but also, and above all, to the considerations based on the data on the labour market and on the geographic settlement of the foreign presence, both the total resident population and the illegal, who commonly are immigrants who have eluded the immigration laws on entry, sojourn or residence and those properly defined as clandestines. In the last decade the foreign population has greatly increased; just consider the fact that the legal residents, that is the people who have a *permiso de residencia*, at the end of 1989 were about 400,000. They were less numerous, however, than those registered in other European countries in the same period; take, for instance, Italy which at the end of 1989 had a foreign resident population of 645,000.

The increase in Spain, however, is highly significant, in particular between 1980 and 1989 when the legal foreign residents doubled, with an annual average growth rate of about 5.6% («a dizzy pace»). The evolution that took place in the sixties is broken down by the author into four phases: 1) 1960-1970: regular growth, even though noticeable, from 65,000 to 148,000; 2) 1970-1980: moderate growth, from 148,000 to 200,000; 3) 1980-1985: faster growth, from 200,000 to 275,000; 4) 1985-1989: accelerated growth, from 275,000 to 410,000.

The accelerated growth in the last four years — which coincides with the period of major economic expansion of the country — mainly reflects an improved coverage of the register, including regularization and other effects of Ley 7/1985, first, above all, the need to get a work permit to obtain the sojourn or residence permit, by the new immigrants drawn by the economic opportunities offered by the country.

It is interesting to note the differentiation of the job fields of the legal foreign presence based on the diverse nationalities: the agriculture and construction sectors hire mainly African workers; the industrial sector, instead, employs Europeans and both North and South Americans; finally, domestic work is dominated by Asian workers, followed by North Americans and Latin Americans. In absolute terms, however, the job market is dominated by European labour, in virtue of — obviously — a bigger overall presence compared to the other nationalities.

The estimate of the foreign presence — referring to the residents — based instead on the data of the *Censo*, was higher than the one of the Ministerio del Interior: 535,000 instead of 463,000 registered by the Ministerio del Interior at the end of 1989: as a result there were 72,000 residents *de hecho*.

Along with the regular presence, there is a considerable irregular presence which is concentrated mainly in the «enclaves ecologicos» in the areas with intense economic activity and specialization in specific industries: the metropolitan areas where the service industry is more developed (Madrid, Barcelona), the areas with high tourist activities (Malaga, the Balearies and

Alicante), and those where major maritime activities are concentrated (Las Palmas, Barcelona and Valencia), as well as the agricultural areas, where work is usually seasonal (fruit and vegetable picking, etc.). A reasonable estimate — based on the data from the Ministerio de Trabajo — gives a total number of irregular workers at the end of 1989 between 80,000 and 104,000 people. Added to the regular workers, they would total between 170,000 and 195,000 individuals.

The irregular immigration seems to have been fed by the flux of permanent and temporary workers, by the reuniting of families, by students, by *jubilados* (retirees) and political refugees.

The exigencies linked to a public opinion ever more reluctant to accept new immigrants, to the numerous presence of foreigners with an irregular status, as well as the administrative weaknesses in controlling the flow of labour across the boundaries, above all at a coordinating level among the ministries involved, have noticeably influenced the immigration policy adopted by the government with the *Acuerdo sobre la regularizacion de trabajadores extranjeros* of 7 June, 1991. The main points are the following: a) to channel the flow of labour based on the needs of the Spanish economy and on the capability of integration in society; b) regularization of foreigners that work with an irregular status; c) to fight clandestine immigration; d) to establish a «Comision Interministerial de Extranjeria», of the «Las Oficinas Unicas de Extranjeros y el Servicio de Inmigracion», with the task of co-ordinating the administrative policies regarding foreigners.

As a result of this last regularization (10 June - 10 December 1991), 100,000 work permits, equal to 75% of the requests, have been granted; furthermore, a considerable presence of irregular Moroccan immigrants, an increase of Latin Americans, a substantial presence of women (32%) among foreigners without documents, as well as a noticeable proportion of illegal workers in agriculture and construction have been identified.

A past of emigration, a present of immigration, but what of the future? This is the question that spontaneously arises from reading this book, though the author authoritatively outlines the trend: the slowing down of the economy, along with the inevitable increase of unemployment, will have as its main effect, at least in the short and medium term — actually, already quite visible — the reduction of incoming flows of immigrants. On the other hand, recent government policies have inevitably linked immigration to the needs of the labour market, where the saturation of the sectors traditionally tied to the demand of foreign labour, has brought the phenomenon to the point of stagnation. «International immigration is mainly a creature of politics» — citing a statement by Kingsley Davis — seems a consideration that can easily be applied to the Iberian experience: a recent experience, but with developments already apparent.

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K. K. PRESTON, *Opera on the Road. Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States 1825-1860*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1993, pp. XVII-479.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the history of «serious» western music was bound up with the history of a circumscribed area of Europe, at times Mediterranean Europe and at others Central Europe. Twentieth-century developments and the transformation of certain peripheral areas into new political and cultural centres have gradually changed the situation and have occasioned the present study in which Katherine Preston addresses a very broad subject, while at the same time focusing on the historical specificity of each of these centres.

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century when the United States in particular developed the political and cultural attributes it was to maintain throughout the twentieth century.

Katherine K. Preston, a lecturer in music at William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia, had already done research on the music market and the musical professions. In *Opera on the Road*, she writes about opera troupes in the United States from 1825 to 1860; inevitably theatrical-musical companies have the lion's share. The author does not aim to present a circumscribed picture of opera, but to envisage opera as part of nineteenth-century musical culture.

In the early nineteenth century, opera in the United States was not an art form for the elite only, but was part of American popular theatre. English, Italian, French and German operatic music was performed in various theatrical forms: in parodies, in brass-band arrangements, in American dance-halls and drawing rooms as well as in opera houses. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was through the musical theatre that popular music sought to rise to a higher level and classical music sought to become popular, following a path which differed from that taken in Europe.

Preston thus takes the reader on a journey tracing the itineraries of the opera troupes in the United States. The first company appeared in 1825 and was the Manuel Garcia's Italian Opera Company, but there were many others. Preston describes their characteristics, size, repertoires, principal and supporting singers, where and how they were hired, opera productions and profits, orchestral players, stars, impresarios, business methods, publicity, techniques, itineraries and means of transport.

This book has a special place in studies on music in America but above all in the history of opera as a whole. Preston points out in the Introduction her conviction that the extraordinary richness of American musical tradition is closely linked to the history of the theatre and largely due — we may add — to the distinctive cultural, political and religious functions of musical events in the United States. There is no doubt that this brought both cultural and economic benefits to American cities in the second half of the nineteenth century; buildings changed roles on account of the liberalisation of business and trade

and American cities continued to demand authors, artists, actors and travellers and were ready to seize on every kind of British talent.

All this is easy to say, but difficult to put into practice. As Preston's research sets out to show, touring companies had in practice to cope with the laws of the free market and the principles on which it was based: thus they had to contend with regulations which governed business and the interests of publishers, impresarios, translators, transcribers, contractors and so on.

Preston's research concerns pre-Civil War America where she discovers that, contrary to expectation, opera as an art-form is performed everywhere. With the exception of New Orleans, no American city had a resident opera company in this period and yet operas were regularly performed by travelling companies. The analysis of these performances is very detailed. American audiences and how they reacted to operas are described. The book's interest is not confined to mere documentation of the fortunes of the travelling vocal companies; the context in which the troupes performed is especially well described. The managerial practices of impresarios and theatrical directors are examined, for example, in the case of Max Maretzek and his *Astor Place Opera Company*, and these sections also touch upon ways of managing theatres, negotiations to engage singers and dancers, and production problems.

However, the book's main concern is how the companies were managed: by studying papers, memoirs, newspapers and magazines of the time in various regions, Preston has been able to throw light on the many aspects of American theatre from 1825: the conditions of contracts between theatres and companies, how performances were planned during the season, how dancers and galas were organised, how singers were replaced, the relationship between orchestra and singers, the role of librettists, the orchestra's composition and how it functioned, stage-set problems, programme printing and press publicity.

Preston has used many American libraries and archives in her research. A great deal of information comes from periodicals about music and the theatre published in the United States between 1823 and 1860. Four collections proved to be extremely useful: the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts and the Newberry Library in Chicago. Musical scores, librettos, theatre bills, concert programmes, manuscript letters and diaries were all valuable. Preston deliberately confined her research to those cities which were particularly important for operatic production in the pre-Civil War period (such as Boston, New York, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Chicago) and did not consult documents concerning major centres such as New Orleans, Cincinnati and St. Louis, since there was a wealth of material in these cities available from secondary but reliable sources.

This book is arranged simply. The Introduction gives an overall view of the travelling companies but above all stresses the interaction between the drama theatre and the musical theatre. There were many musical interludes in every play and American audiences found little difference between plays and opera; 50% of

theatrical performances in the United States were musical performances. Both resident and touring companies usually included many operatic works in their repertoires. In 1820 these same companies included in their repertoires for the first time Italian operas adapted for the English stage by British composers. Henry Rowley Bishop's American version of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* was first performed in the United States by New York's Park Theatre Stock Company in 1817.

The introduction of Italian operas in these companies' repertoires coincided with the first appearances in America of very famous English singers like Charles Incedon and Thomas Philipps who helped to popularise a particular taste for Italian melody. On the one hand, this continued the American theatre's dependence on Great Britain, but on the other hand, the so-called «star-system» consolidated the American theatre: for the early years of the nineteenth century, many English actors, theatrical musicians and managers emigrated to the United States where a production system of sets, costumes and scenery began to emerge.

Local stock companies gradually became self-sufficient and able to produce shows and operas independently. The transformation of travelling companies from a group represented essentially by vocal stars to specialised travelling *ensembles* was likewise gradual. The change had taken place by about 1850.

There are six chapters after the Introduction. Chapters 1, 3 and 5 deal with the Italian and English operatic companies and aim to trace their respective itineraries to show how widely they travelled. Chapters 2, 4 and 6 analyse in detail specific companies' particular seasons in different periods. In the conclusion, pre-Civil War America's theatrical and musical tastes are described from a socio-economic perspective.

In her descriptions of the various opera companies Preston includes repertoires, theatres, singers, impresarios and orchestral players, producing tables, illustrations and quotations which, used to effect, contribute to the book's clarity.

At the end of the book there are notes, a weighty bibliography, the index of names and a four-part Appendix which lists the staff of the Italian companies in the United States between 1833 and 1847, the list of travelling opera companies in the United States between 1841 and 1848 in chronological order, the itineraries of the Italian companies in America between 1847 and 1860 and the list of English companies present between 1847 and 1960. Lastly, the «Commentary and Sources» is very useful.

The book is the result of careful research in a little-explored field and is an important contribution to musicology and history. It is worth reading for the originality of the subject-matter, for its clarity, rich documentation and detailed critical analysis. Such qualities are appreciated at a first reading because of Preston's pleasant style. She writes with a competence which stems from her familiarity with and awareness of her subject.

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C. H. ROELL, *The Piano in America, 1890-1940*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 199, pp. XX-396.

First published in 1989 and then again in several further editions, Craig H. Roell's book has been widely acclaimed by critics and readers alike after the Board which supervised his doctorate thesis at the University of Texas, at Austin, gave it official mention.

The book's main qualities are its clarity and the rigorous, original way in which the subject matter is treated. The book is accessible to the non-economist and the non-musician, despite its sharp, conceptual insights. It is written in such a way that the reader is guided step by step along the path of research, and is correctly confronted with methodological assumptions, the results of research and debates: a mark of that patient and honest intellectual labour that distinguishes well-directed and well-motivated research.

The *Piano in America* is the result of several years' interdisciplinary research into music, economics and social history and as such is a pioneering study. The author's main aim is to stress the value of interdisciplinary research into economics and music which can account for the role of the piano as a whole, setting it in the wider economic, cultural and social context, independently of the historical, ideological and cultural differences between the two subjects which would otherwise strongly condition such a study.

The book, based mainly on hitherto unpublished material, is the fruit of careful and thorough archival research using a large number of American sources. Focusing on the piano market, Roell has produced an important study of the transition in America from an ethics-dominated society in the nineteenth century to the twentieth-century consumer society. At the same time it is the first detailed account of the piano market in America, piano manufacture being once the dominant industry in the music business.

The piano symbolised Victorian middle-class values. The great efforts made to learn how to play the instrument reflected the conviction that the piano promoted cultural refinement and moral edification, bringing good music into the home. The American piano industry was born of Victorian moral values.

The title itself, *The Piano in America* and the Introduction's opening statement are all-revealing: there is probably no country in the world where piano-playing is so widespread as in the United States, where even the humblest home has a piano. In writings about the history of the piano in America, Roell tries to show how in one hundred years technology has revolutionised the Western concept of music and given rise to a more universal concept. He thus shows how, at various levels and not only at the level of the specialist, technology has influenced everyone's musical experience.

The book has six chapters, arranged chronologically but not too rigidly, which provide the necessary background to the history of the piano in America. After the Introduction, the first chapter, *The Place of Music in the Victorian Frame of Mind*, takes us straight into the climate of the Victorian Age when music had an

unquestionable moral value. But with the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the victory of the Union States, the American economy began to grow rapidly and in a mere forty years industrial production quintupled. Economic growth on the one hand led to an extremely rapid accumulation of capital and on the other to a sort of intellectual isolationism. Faced with such rapid and radical changes, American intellectuals had very different reactions. Composers in particular were faced with a range of stimuli and cultural tastes as vast as America itself. For example, the «velocity and vivacity» of American ragtime were directly influenced by the contemporary automobile, the saloon car. The movement of its engine determined a new movement characterised by explosive rhythms. A «musical democracy» developed (Chapter II) which sought to make music universally accessible, an aim which, while modifying and extending the cultural and moral benefits of music, increased sales for the piano industry. By appropriating market strategies, the piano industry therefore helped to create the «consumer» of culture.

The technological and social revolution caused by the pianola's appearance on the market was an unprecedented event. The industry achieved great success in mass-marketing, selling an instrument which did not require special study and was soon to be found in every home in America.

By examining books and magazines of the first decade of the twentieth century and the papers belonging to the Steinway family and in the firm's archives, Roell has been able to place in a historical perspective the piano industry's contribution to modern market philosophy. Chapter III, with its «anatomical» description of the piano industry, is particularly interesting. The trend of American companies to merge into corporations gave rise to huge limited companies which, through financial agreements (trusts or combinations of different corporations and cartels), created a monopolistic regime instead of competition. In 1892, a first attempt was made to organise the piano trust. It was proposed that the capital should be fixed at 50 million dollars. A new organisation, The American Piano and Organ Company, aimed to incorporate many firms to establish its monopoly.

The industrial production of trade-marks and the system of ordering goods by correspondence were greeted favourably by the piano industry right from the end of the nineteenth century. William Tonk, one of the first industrial manufacturers, estimated that 70% of the industry produced pianos without a name or used different names of their own for instruments as they tried to offer goods at lower prices. However, this practice jeopardised the quality of the product.

The complexity of the piano market's progress in the United States is summarised in a number of tables which complement the text and which contain data and figures about piano prices over the years. Chapter IV is just as dense: by referring to the Balding Company and to Steinway & Sons Roell reveals the piano market's various strategies.

The piano business was among the first to make effective use of practices such

as market products, publicity on a national scale, the «loyalty-to-a-make ethic» and hire purchase. Piano sales played an important — though often little appreciated — role, too, in the spread of musical appreciation and musical education in the United States through organisations such as the National Piano Manufacturers Association, the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music and the Music Industry Chamber of Commerce.

Successful pianola sales had given the piano market a big boost but it was threatened by one of its own pre-conditions — technological innovation. When the radio, the cinema and other entertainment forms began to fight for the consumers' attention in the 1920s, the piano industry was faced with financial ruin (Chapter V). The Wall Street Crash marked the beginning of a period of deep recession which over the next five years caused the primary economic indicators to fall by about 50%, plunging into blackest poverty those social classes who were under the illusion that they could achieve relative wealth (Chapter VI). Production far outran the market's capacity to absorb, which was limited by unemployment and lack of money; moreover industrial closures and the parallel recession in agriculture had caused agricultural prices and living standards to go on falling. The answer to the crisis was the New Deal which marked the transition from a no-holds-barred liberalist and individualist capitalistic period to a state-controlled and state-organised era.

The New Deal, together with the mass-media's growing importance, contributed to making artists aware of the problem of communication and the intelligibility of the message. The New Deal mobilised a group of artists who would have otherwise enlarged the ranks of the unemployed. To deal with the problems of musicians and painters, it set up Work Progress Administration departments for social work (mural paintings, music for films and radio programmes etc.). Other consequences of the New Deal's cultural policy were the rise of corporatist organisations and the increasingly frequent use of popular themes with a very much simplified musical language. From the 1930s onwards, the piano managed to regain partially its position in a changing economy because the instrument was redesigned to pander to modern taste and to give renewed importance to family life and to the ethical value of piano music. In a period of rapid social change and economic chaos, the piano industry reasserted the instrument's «domestic» value, re-establishing its traditional role.

The pianola, with its revolution, was short-lived, radio and the gramophone evolved, but the piano re-established its position with great dignity, symbolising again American middle-class family life. However, it should be recognised that the pianola's revolutionary appearance led to the creation of a piano market that knew no bounds and which has no equal in today's world.

Roell's book reveals the diversity of so much musical and industrial production, the way it was organised, how the industry functioned and how the goods were received; in other words, how the world of music changed in America over about a hundred years. Continual references and quotations from the sources document the study. The book is therefore important both for the

method used and for the emphasis it gives to local studies, a now accepted area of research, which is particularly relevant in the case of a country like America with its multiplicity of cultural and artistic production centres. Only by comparing the results of this research can a history of music be written which is not merely a history of forms and style.

The text is followed by a very useful documentary appendix: the list of the manuscript sources, the bibliographic references used in the notes and a more selective bibliography that lists all the collections, periodicals, articles and books which make up the bulk of the material on which the author based his research. The index of names is very useful.

The book is well presented, with tables and black and white illustrations.

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J. TURNER (ed.), *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany. British Occupation Policy and the Western Zone, 1945-55*, Oxford/New York/Munich, Berg, 1989, pp. XVII-421, with tables and diagrams.

For some time now the publishing house Berg has taken on a role of mediation between Britain and Germany. The most recent of a fair number of works on contemporary German history published by Berg, this book brings together the papers (many of which are by young British scholars) presented at a conference on the Allied occupation in West Germany following the Potsdam Convention (1945) which divided the country into four zones of influence: Russian (the future Democratic Republic), French, American and British.

The interest in post-war history and especially in the dark and distressing period preceding the economic miracle is now well established. This book, edited by Turner, contains a collection of studies based on fresh data which have become available owing to the accessibility of documents in German archives now that the thirty years' secrecy have elapsed. Moreover, the very nationality of most of the authors means that some of the pitfalls of German historiography about the subject deriving from ideological rather than scientific motives are avoided. Overall, the essays are well documented and well balanced. Not only do they complement the German debate but they provide an important insight into post-war Europe. As such they are a good example of integrated history involving an extremely interesting case of interaction between two countries. Paraphrasing a passage from the book we could say that «British occupation... reveals as much about the occupying nation as it does about the society that was occupied» (cf. p. 238).

The essays, on the whole, are quite specialised, but together they offer a detailed and ample picture of the period, bringing to light the complex and at

times contradictory relations between politics, economics and society. Much of the book focuses on the impact of British policy on the economy of the Western Zones, including the Ruhr nerve centre. An original contribution by W. Carlin analyses the years before the 1948 monetary reform which re-introduced a free market into Germany. Going against the dominant trends in present-day historiography, Turner re-assesses the far-reaching and positive effects of such a reform through the concept of «vegetative control» (elaborated by the economist Kornai) which is useful for studying an economy in very unstable conditions in which there is a minimum level of response to stimuli not expressed in prices.

Much of the uncertainty was due to the presence of the occupying regimes themselves, which should have drawn up and developed themselves a new economic and institutional system for a new and pacific Germany. The main item on the victors' agenda was industrial policy, which is examined in the essays by Turner, Roseman and Warner. These reveal very clearly the basic ambivalence between the need to neutralise once and for all Germany as a power and the need to get its industry going again in order to guarantee the survival of the defeated population which was too costly for the other European countries to undertake. Kramer addresses the issue of industrial dismantlement which has caused wide debate but has not been subject to serious scientific enquiry. Although the British desired to reduce competition from German industry and to appropriate German know-how, according to Kramer the direct and indirect effects of dismantlement should be scaled down; after 1948 the policy was soon to become anachronistic when the ground was laid for the general recovery of the Germany economy.

Another group of essays casts light on the British policy of denazification which had as incisive an impact on Germany at the time and on its future as did the economic measures. The three contributions by Marshall, Welch and Turner stress how important was the belief — although it is only now that we may use this word — in the existence of a strong German national character which was inevitably equated with Prussian militarism, the forerunner of Nazism. Atlee declared, for example, that «there had been no normal Germany for fifty years or more, except one governed by a centralised and militaristic machine» (*op. cit.* p. 190.).

Such stereotyping was loaded with consequences — including British distrust even towards Nazi opposition groups — and led to further ambivalence in the attitude of the occupiers who were sceptical as to the possibility of re-educating Germans according to the principles of democracy and who were engaged in the paradoxical task of cutting down centralism and imposing democracy from above. The result was the «exportation» of British institutions and principles (with a major role being ascribed to the mass media) which were partly rejected and partly assimilated. Especially interesting is Marshall's reconstruction of British attitudes towards the German administrative system, a kind of laboratory test for demonstrating the clash between a tradition of centralised bureaucracy and the deep-seated British commitment to liberalism and local autonomy.

The last group of essays concerns specific social groups: trade unions and refugees. Hubsch reconstructs step by step the relationship between trade unions — an influential political interlocutor during such a dark period, especially as regards measures for industry — and the occupying governments from 1945 to 1949. Lastly Connor enquires into a hitherto neglected aspect of the 1948 monetary reform; while scholars have concentrated on its effects on Germany's economic recovery and on the strengthening of the country's democratic and free-enterprise institutions, Connor draws attention to the negative effects on different social groups, above all on German refugees who were impoverished and suffered hardship as a result of the reform. Turner concludes the book with a thematic overview of the extant literature on the British occupation of Germany, producing a very useful appendix which, given the liveliness of debate on the subject, will almost certainly be subject to frequent updating.

The British occupation officially ended in 1955, but Western Germans had for some years already taken over political and economic control of the country. The main aim of British occupation policy — a federal Germany ruled by a trustworthy government, loyal to her European partners — had been reached. As a result of the economic miracle — European and not just German — of the 1950s and 1960s and the emergence of competition fought exclusively with economic weapons, which was softened by the will to build a common market, the confused ideologies and stereotypes of the post-war years were becoming increasingly obsolete. This book makes it easier for us to understand the difficult and painful period of transition to the more peaceful Europe of today, providing a much fuller account of events which have for long been the jealous preserve of political history.

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L. VARDI, *The Land and the Loom. Peasants and Profit in Northern France 1680-1800*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1993, pp. XII-297.

To the rich and diversified historiographic debate initiated many years ago and aimed at emphasizing the role of manufacturing in rural environments, the present research, however limited the field of action analysed, contributes diverse elements of novelty and interest.

The book is divided into three parts: the first describes the context in which the research is set — Montigny, a village in the south-east of the old province of Cambrésis — and studies in particular its inhabitants and the role of local institutions. The second part focuses on the area's agricultural system, the analysis of the type of property, and production; the third analyzes the nature

of the manufacturing industry and the organization of rural commerce, which established itself towards the end of the early-modern age.

Montigny was located in a province dominated by the church. About 40% of the land in the Cambrésis area belonged to the church and most of the local power was in its hands. Such a significant presence is due to the fact that the archbishop's palace was situated in the heart of the province and that the church's fortune originated from many donations in the early modern age. On the other hand, the role of outside authorities and local aristocrats was certainly less important. Substantial improvement in agricultural production was not feasible in the Montigny territory: in a study carried out in 1795 aimed at exploring the quality of the land, it was estimated that 55% of the soil was defined as poor, 33% was considered passable and only 12% was regarded as good. Furthermore, in the above-mentioned report, the agricultural area of Montigny was described as one of the most backward, not only in the district, but also in the entire department.

The economic condition of farmers was very difficult in this small village studied by Liana Vardi. Not by chance, from the registers of the local Chapter it is possible to deduce that of the 36 families present at the end of the seventeenth century only 3 families remained in the eighteenth century, as the others were forced to emigrate. Thus the author highlights how there came to be high mobility during the modern epoch: land was not considered a sacred entity, and there was no particular ancestral attachment to it.

However, pieces of land were sold, exchanged and mortgaged not only in times of crisis, but also as a way of investing. And this reveals a clear diversity from the analyses carried out in other rural areas in France. Indeed, one of the fundamental arguments of the proto-industrialization theory is the gradual pauperizing of the countryside, mainly due to the extreme sub-division of the land. The farmers with little or no land, searching for additional income, turned to manufacturing to alleviate their hard conditions of poverty. The author agrees that the number of farmers owning land decreased in the eighteenth century and that the process became more and more evident in the last decades. However — and this is the thesis that the author repeats in different parts of the book — the thrust to disengage from the land was not only a symptom of increasing indigence, or at least it could not be the only explanation. In fact, the research states that the land was always commercialized throughout the period under examination, even in moments of activity and prosperity in the agricultural market. The buyers were almost always local residents or inhabitants of nearby villages; so no expropriation from the outside, and in particular from the city, took place.

On the other hand, despite the high mobility, the improvements introduced in the primary sector penetrated very slowly and gradually. Montigny, but also the entire area of Cambrésis, remained a locality with a three-year rotation and open-field system; the region continued to depend on the traditional crops of wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, broad beans, lentils and peas. The only individuals who introduced substantial innovations in the methods of cultivation were the few big landowners of the village, increasing the average capital invested.

In the eighteenth century, Montigny changed from an essentially agricultural village to an industrial, market-oriented one. Manufacturing was gradually incorporated into household activities, even though at various degrees of intensity. The linkage between agricultural and artisanal activities created hybrid social and economic groups, among which work in agriculture dominated in the first half of the century, while artisan production gradually took its place in the second half. Following the agricultural crisis in 1740 and the animal plague in 1744, which extensively weakened the agricultural middle class, the textile sector became an alternative for all the farmers in the area. However, even in this case, the author underlines that the adoption of cottage industry was not necessarily a symptom of the economic and social decline of families: they, and in particular the new generations, realized that this activity would increase their profits, whatever their original condition. Therefore, the passage was less traumatic or brusque than usually hypothesized: as a matter of fact, in the second half of the eighteenth century the expansion of the cottage industry model and the relative development of credit produced a new dynamism in Montigny.

These two elements created new opportunities for wealth and social advancement that did not exist in the dominant agricultural economy in preceding centuries. Given these opportunities, not only the poor of the village took up weaving; the younger brothers of middle-class farmers were increasingly tempted into this activity. Some data is indicative: in the eighteenth century, the population of Montigny increased from 200 to about 600 inhabitants, and at the end of the eighteenth century, two thirds of the male population were spinners. Despite the intermittent commercial crises, demand sharply increased over the century and production rocketed. Montigny marketed its products in the three major centres of the region: Cambrai and Valenciennes in the north and Saint-Quentin in the south.

The edict of 1762 that deregulated manufacturing in the countryside determined a rapid expansion and intensification of credit. The numerous and endless legal battles testify to both the vast expansion of credit in this period and also the fragility of the system itself, which was still in an embryonic phase as to the procedures used. In seeking loans, the merchant-weavers mostly preferred turning to their families or neighbours, and not to the city. One of the reasons was to ensure a discreet independence. The village merchant-weaver, however, did not abandon his old vocation: he maintained strong ties to the land, and besides stimulating urban commercial activities, he generated in the village itself new revenue and profits that were then reinvested in agricultural activities.

In analyzing the effects by the Revolution in the rural world under examination, the author refers extensively to the well-known studies by Georges Lefebvre, agreeing on the fact that the balance was more negative than positive. On the one hand, the sales of domestic goods seemed to generate some expansion, so much so that 191.1 hectares, of which 159.2 were confiscated from the Church, were sold in Montigny between 1791 and 1800, only partially satisfying the need of land by local farmers since the actual winners were the

mercantile elites. On the other hand, the outbreak of the war brusquely interrupted foreign sales of manufactured products and the local luxury market declined with the departure of the wealthier classes of the village. The Revolution had re-established the urban dominance in this area, leaving the aspiring weavers the possibility of choosing to move to the city or to go back to farming.

In conclusion, the author's research is without doubt a solid contribution to the present historiographical debate, even though a more extended comparison with other studies on non-French geographical areas would have integrated and enriched the overall perspective, probably making some of the author's theses less absolute and more tentative.

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