REVIEWS OF BOOKS

F.C. CASULA, *Profilo Storico della Sardegna catalano-aragonese* (Cagliari, C.N.R., Centro di studi sui rapporti Italo-Iberici, 5), Cagliari 1982, 180 p.

This is the first general study of Sardinian history in the XIVth and XVth centuries, and covers a period when the clan societies of the island first began to adapt themselves to the framework of feudal law through to the brutal experience of conquest motivated by factors of economic and strategic advantage which brought the island resentfully into contact with the modern world, yet without depriving it of its identity.

In 1297 the Papacy turned Corsica and Sardinia into fictional kingdoms, enfeofed in theory to the Aragonese ruler James II in compensation for the loss of Sicily which was about to embark on a century of troubled independence. The author has provided an extremely lucid guide to the subsequent political history of Sardinia, while his biographical appendix contains an exhaustive compilation of all publications since 1945. Amongst these political developments there are certain points that will be of particular interest to the economic historian. The dualism of social organization on the island after the suppression of Pisan sovereignty in 1325 meant that feudalism was established at two separate levels which survived until abolition in 1836-9, and which dominated virtually all land and men on the island. On top of this was superimposed a triple hierarchy of administration (judicial, patrimonial and military) which further aggravated the fragmentation of the land that was handed over to the grain merchants (pp. 18-19: cf. M. Tangheroni's book on Sardinia). The author has provided us with an administrative map of the island togeher with an indispensable guide to its genealogy (the Arborea, Barecola, Transtamare, Doria and Carros families) which enable us to place its silent and unchanging

structures within the broader context of European history. The description of the development of the Sardinian nation from the mid-XIVth century to the late XVth century is especially striking (pp. 46 ff.) and shows clearly the reasons for the different political aspirations of the Narbonne, Bas, Doria and Rocaberti families. Yet within these divergent political ambitions there was also a common feature of commercial interest, which is perhaps best indicated by the important contributions that the salt and corn trade made to their revenues. The study ends with the destruction of the marquisate of Oristano and the defeat by what we would now call Spain of the final aristocratic rebels (1478), long after the last of the rural communities in Sardinia had been reduced to silence (pp. 122 ff.). The high standard of the diplomatic and literary sources used throughout adds further to the quality of this excellent book which well reflects the remarkable erudition of its author.

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J.R. HANSON II, *Trade in Transition — Exports from the Third World 1840-1900*, Academic Press, New York, 1980, pp. XII & 197, index.

This book contains an empirical analysis of exports of the less developed countries (LDCs) during the later part of the nineteenth century, with a view to challenging some common interpretations concerning the role of foreign demand for primary products in the economic development of the Third World. The author employs data from contemporary U.S. and British sources on the growth, composition, and destination of LDC exports for several benchmark years between 1840 and 1900. An attempt is also made to assess the proportional contribution of external demand and of internal supply factors, such as product diversification and competitiveness, in the LDC export performance. The discussion is supplemented by an examination of the individual histories of exports of specific products, such as cotton, silk, sugar, tea, coffee, rubber and mineral products.

The main analytical issue addressed in the book is whether or not the LDCs benefited from export-led economic development following their entry into world trade. The main thesis put forward is that the growth of the world economy during most decades of the nineteenth century, while spectacular in itself, was insufficient to improve the economic prospects of the LDCs. Based on this finding, Hanson questions the plausibility of both the "export-led" theories that place the primary emphasis on the growth of world demand for LDC growth, and of the radical or neo-Marxian view which explains underdevelopment of the LDCs in terms of exploitative behaviour by advanced nations.

The conventional view of the stimulative role of export growth is criticized on the ground that the rate of growth of LDC exports in aggregate volumes actually decelerated after 1860. In addition, changes in the commodity

composition of exports after 1850 were less profound than is commonly supposed. The deceleration in exports is attributed to a slackening of British demand and inadequate compensatory growth in other countries of Europe and of North America. This slackening was due in large part to the fact that the LDCs faced increasing competition from the developed countries in many of their traditional export products — a fact which probably led to some diversification in the composition of their exports, but not enough to significantly alter the volume of total exports.

There were undoubtedly purely internal factors as well that tended to inhibit the growth of LDC exports during the latter part of the century. Hanson argues that apart from natural calamities, such as the Asian coffee blight, the development of processing and manufacturing activities in LDCs may have led to a slowdown in the rate of growth of their exports of raw materials. The prime example of this phenomenon is the growth of cotton and jute manufactures in the then British India which preempted a portion of potential exports of raw cotton and jute for domestic processing. However, Hanson's data reveal that the export-retarding effects of changes in domestic supply were offset by the opposite effect of reductions in cost and supply-prices, such as improved methods of sugar production in Java, Jamaica, and British Guiana, and of tea production in India and Ceylon. As a result, the opposite implications of the two divergent trends may have offset each other as far as the aggregate exports of the LDCs are concerned. The cumulative effect of all these factors was to diminish the external stimulus to economic development in Africa, Asia and Latin America as the nineteenth century progressed.

While Hanson's scrutiny of the data is unimpeachable, there remain certain analytical problems with his interpretation. In advancing his thesis, Hanson does not really question the logic of export-led growth. In fact, the only reason in Hanson's analysis for the failure of large dynamic gains from trade to accrue to the LDCs is simply that as the orientation of the LDCs to world trade increased during the later part of the nineteenth century, the growth rate of foreign demand happened to fall. The gains from trade did not materialize in the middle decades of the century either, primarily because export sectors in LDCs during this period were *small* and, therefore, could not be expected to provide the requisite linkages with internal development.

This interpretation raises a number of analytical difficulties. First, it begs the question as to what is the optimal rate of growth of foreign demand, and hence of the rate of growth of exports, at which it starts to become beneficial to the internal development. This in itself opens the analysis to arbitrariness. If internal development did not take place for any reason, it could be ascribed to a lack of external stimulus. By the same token, a high rate of internal development when it did take place could be conveniently ascribed to external development. Second, Hanson makes the implicit assumption that the impact of external demand on overall economic development is a

function of the *size* of export sectors in LDCs. The size of the export sector by itself, however, tells very little about its impact on overall growth of the economy. This growth would seem more to be a function of the intensity of economic interaction which the export sector has with the rest of the economy. In other words, the impact of the export sector would ultimately depend on the degree of articulation with other producing and consuming sectors with which it may be linked through input-output relationship. A large export sector with negligible interaction with the rest of the economy may simple degenerate into an " enclave " sector and, far from being the leading sector, may in fact be inimical to overall growth. Third, export-led growth ignores a number of preconditions of growth which are vital for the transformation of LDCs from stagnant to growing economies. The structural implications of a particular export sector, regardless of its size, as reflected in inter-industry repercussions, investment, labour training and technology may be such that its export-expanding effects (usually measured in terms of final output) may not be all that beneficial for economic development. The export-led thesis probably has some validity in a multilateral world composed of countries at approximately similar stages of development, and those that have solved their structural problems. In that context, the growth of world demand in a few leading countries could provide " locomotion " to economic growth in other countries. But, the validity of the export-led growth in structurally fragmented economies like those of the LDCs has to be seriously questioned. The phenomena of rapidly rising exports from a limited number of raw material producing sectors and a relative general stagnation throughout the rest of the economy (for instance, Brazil in the nineteenth century) are neither uncommon nor unconnected with each other.

The chief contribution of this book lies in a careful arrangement of data and the clarification of a number of important empirical questions. However, the interpretation that export-led growth could not have occurred simply because the growth of exports actually decelerated after 1860 does not answer all the questions. In a similar vein, while Hanson's analysis throws interesting light on theories of exploitation in foreign trade, it does not constitute their refutation, since they are based on essentially different premises. Exploitation could occur just as well when the growth of exports is decelerating.

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H. KAELBLE, *Historical Research on Social Mobility. Western Europe and the USA in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Transl. by Ingrid Noakes. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981, pp. 160.

Popular — and much of scholarly — wisdom was certain that social mo-

bility, vulgarly taken to mean upward mobility, accelerated during the transformations brought about by industrial revolution and that in comparative perspective the United States had the more open society with better opportunities to climb the social ladder. This wisdom was founded on the empirical but unsystematic evidence of the magnitude of changes wrought by the process of industrialization and on the ideological paradigm of a U.S. society without classes. Like many of the long accepted generalizations of historians and sociologists those concerning social mobility are trash as an increasing number of case studies, usually of single towns or cities, demonstrate. But the case studies are not without problems either: their methods are not easily comparable, the conclusions of each and every one of them refers only to the single locality studied, they generally cover a few decades only. Nevertheless Hartmut Kaelble has attempted to summarize and compare their main findings in a highly condensed research report.

In his introduction he reports the main traditional assumptions and hypotheses. He then proceeds to outline the trends of social mobility during the period of industrialization (in the context of the studies: the nineteenth century) and the twentieth century. While industrialization led to an enormous geographical mobility, " it produced far less social mobility and remarkably little upward mobility " (33). Geographic mobility was probably induced by comparatively low social mobility in the society of origin rather than itself inducing high upward social mobility in the receiving society. For the twentieth century the conventional thesis of a stagnation in mobility rates given the decrease in economic change cannot be sustained for all societies under consideration. For some recent work shows " a slight increase in social mobility rates which has not, however, removed the high degree of inequality of opportunity " (33).

Readers who are not familiar with the indicators and methods of mobility studies should at this point turn to Kaelble's last chapter, in which he discusses terminology, the implied concepts, statistical methods and general shortcomings of the discipline. As to the latter: " Works which include female persons are just as rare as those which cover several generations " (114). These are serious shortcomings indeed. The limited upward mobility of (mainly immigrant) male workers in industrializing U.S.-American society was based on decreasing job opportunities for women in the period between the Civil and the First World War. This demonstrates limitations of studies that leave out the least fortunate sections of society, even if the reason is lack of census or other statistical data. As to the limitations in time, intergenerational mobility would be the more meaningful indicator, since almost all persons on the labour market experience some upward mobility from their age of entrance, the late teens to their thirties, as Stephan Thernstrom pointed out in his pioneering work. Secondly, absence of upward mobility from fathers to sons might lead to a question which few of the students of mobility ever ask: did people want to move upward, particularly, did they want to leave their class or social group? The

whole assumption of a general striving for upward mobility may be a middle-class notion — as some authors admit when confronted with refusal of social groups to make use of opportunities which social structures and economic developments do provide.

Kaelble's central three chapters concern "opportunities for *upward mobility* among industrial workers" (emphasis added), "the development of equality of opportunity in the education sector" and the "recruitment of elites." It is impossible to do justice either to the complexity of findings of the dozens of studies that form the basis of Kaelble's synthesis, or to his concise as well as differentiated summary. But the main point seems to be that the working class had only very limited opportunities for upward mobility, either within the class or through educational facilities out of it, and even less chance for entering into the elite. Whatever broadening there was in elite recruitment and educational opportunities, it was different sections of the middle class that benefited, depending on specific social circumstances and economic developments. The second important generalization is that upward mobility did not differ significantly from European to North American towns, whether in the United States or Canada. Rather opportunities depend on the particular societal situation in a particular town. It might be noted at this point that contrary his title, Kaelble does include mobility studies of Canadian towns. In the chapter on educational opportunities Kaelble is forced to limit the comparison to European nations because even revisionist scholars of United States education have been concerned exclusively with ideologies motivating changes rather than with the opportunities and actual careers of school graduates on the labor market. Working classes and elites are accorded approximately the same space in Kaelble's summary. While this may not be justified from the relative importance of each, the study of elites has preoccupied scholars to a degree that the largest body of literature has been produced in this part of the field.

There are some weaknesses in Kaelble's synthesis. He states inherent shortcomings of mobility research like the exclusion of women, but does not call for a revision of the approach in general. Working-class and lower middle-class attitudes toward upward mobility need more consideration; downward mobility is still neglected though it forms the other side of the coin in several case studies which interpret their empirical data (on white males) as showing upward mobility; the labour aristocracy theory is considerably more complex — and probably of less validity — than indicated. It has to be noted that the English version under review here is based on a German version published in 1977 with only minor additions. These criticisms notwithstanding Kaelble's synthesis is a must for scholars in the social sciences. In this as in many other fields we have been witnessing for two decades the publication of usually highly sophisticated case studies which demolish much of our conventional theories. Any attempt to derive from these a new synthesis is not only welcome at this stage but absolutely necessary and Kaelble is highly successful and stimulating

in his effort. He is cautious when summarizing findings to show trends, detailed on differences between countries and cities, clear and convincing when relating general hypotheses to special research. The book is well organized and readable.

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M.F. MAZZAOUI, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the Later Middle Ages 1100-1600*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, xv, 250 pp.

This is an intelligently conceived, well organized, clearly written study of a subject long in need of examination. Based upon both unpublished documentation in north Italian archives and scholarly literature, it offers an excellent survey of a complex issue. Professor Mazzaoui demonstrates the importance of an industry and trade that long have been overshadowed by the manufacture and commerce of wool in medieval and Renaissance Europe.

Succint chapters highlight major aspects of the topic, beginning with a survey of "Cotton cultivation in the ancient and medieval world." From being a luxury industry in the ancient world, cotton manufacture by the Muslims aimed at mass markets and was subject to state regulation. Arab conquests introduced the cotton plant to the western Mediterranean. More interesting than such bold outlines are Mazzaoui's discussions of the varieties of cotton plants, soils, dyes, qualities of cotton fabrics and products, and the functions of and relations among various trade routes. Chapter 2, "The Mediterranean cotton trade 1100-1600," accomplishes much in small compass. It elucidates the grades and varieties of manufactured cottons, their places of production, trade routes, and intended markets. "Syria was the single most important source of high-grade cotton for Western industries" (p. 38). Not unexpectedly, Venice and Genoa long engaged in a see-saw struggle for supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean cotton trade. "...in the early fourteenth century the character of the cotton trade was fundamentally altered. The rise of the south German and Flemish industries, the expansion of production in central Italy and the heavy demand for cotton and cotton goods in other parts of Europe expanded the radius of traffic" (p. 43). This chapter includes well reasoned estimates of the changing volume of cotton trade and sensible attempts to estimate the volume of imports. From the "twelfth through the early sixteenth centuries... the expansion of the areas of cultivation, especially in the Venetian possessions, coupled with improvements in shipping and navigation, permitted the importation of an ever larger volume of cotton" (p. 53).

Chapter 3 treats "The spread of cotton manufacture," which first took hold in twelfth and thirteenth-century northern Italy, an area "which alone provided the essential condition for the growth of an export industry geared to mass production and the marketing of cheap textiles" (p. 59). As elsewhere

in the book, cotton manufacture and trade here are compared with the silk and wool industries. Mazzaoui skillfully utilizes municipal statutes to illuminate not only the nature of cotton manufacture, but the gradual development of standardization, an essential for mass production. Chapter 4, " Technological innovation," contains an excellent survey of the major processes in cotton manufacture and the innovations that gave northern Italy its manufacturing advantages.

" The structure of demand: products and markets," examines, inter alia, " the degree and rate of technological transmission between the Islamic world and the West in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries " (p. 89). Because of technological barriers, taste, and conscious choice, " only a limited amount of industrial know-how actually reached the West " (p. 90). The author here examines the variations in dyeing and their relation to differing market and product demand. Fashion and social status are interwoven in this survey of changing cotton manufactures.

Chapter 6, " Guild and entrepreneurial structures," is rich in broadly sketched fascinating themes, including the relation of the new cotton industry to urban topography, the development and utilization of trademarks and their role in regional standardization, and the nature and functioning of urban merchant associations that stood above the individual guilds and " also exercised a broad tutelage over the industrial sector " (p. 121).

The two remaining chapters treat " The growth of cotton manufacture north of the Alps," with the greatest attention devoted to " Italy and south Germany 1300-1600 " (Capter 7). This contains fine comparisons of the Italian silk, woollen, linen, and cotton industries and their vicissitudes. " From the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries Italy's major mass-production industry — cotton manufacture — followed a downward course which was markedly different from the behaviour of the other branches of the textile industry " (p. 138). Mazzaoui examines the ways in which competition from Swabian cities in particular came to damage Italian cotton production. Focusing upon differences in industrial organization she notes that unlike Italy, " In Germany, where guild organization was weaker, production was decentralized. Merchant capitalists employed large numbers of rural weavers who were less skilled, less supervised and commanded lower wages than city workers... which accounts for the lower quality and price of German fustians " (p. 142). Mazzaoui finds that the Italians did not try to compete with the Germans by lowering prices and quality " because of higher production costs occasioned by (1) the heavy burden of taxation ,(2) the wage demands of urban labourers and, (3) guild restrictions which hampered changes in the mode and techniques of production " (p. 150). A final brief chapter " European cotton manufacture on the eve of the Industrial Revolution," traces the movement of cotton manufacture, and its supremacy, from one land to another after some two and a half centuries of Lombard and Swabian hegemony (1350-1600).

Despite the too well known reasons for economy the prestigious Cambridge University Press did a disservice to this fine book by locating the notes, most of them discursive, at the end of the volume. For those who constitutionally only give credence to a review that criticizes, one might wish that many issues had been treated more extensively or that such topics as the impact of cotton manufacture on the families and lives of the workers had been investigated in depth. This, however, would be to cavil, and to request a different book. The present one serves its purpose splendidly.

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M.B. MILLER, *The Bon Marché. Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. XII, 266.

In the vast body of economic historical literature, the amount of space devoted to retailing has been relatively small. This state of affairs is somewhat strange in view of the fact that many macro-economic histories have regarded consumption as the prime mover among the myriad of factors involved in economic growth. Probably the lack of attention given to retailing can be explained by the circumstance that under the guild system in Europe, selling was closely connected with production and was rarely considered in any detail apart from it. One might argue, I suppose, that the medieval fairs provided an opportunity for impersonal transactions, for merchants sold goods made for unknown buyers. Fairs had, however, limitations on retailing because they were held infrequently, involved expensive travel to fair towns, and did not sell necessarily to ultimate consumers.

As trade in special articles, like spices, tea, coffee, cane sugar, and tobacco developed, small stores (groceries and tobacconists) were needed to solve the problems of maintaining inventories to meet local demand between uncertain opportunities to replenish stocks, to furnish adequate storage facilities, and to provide necessary financing for acquiring large supplies. The retail store, which had disappeared in later Roman times, was thus resurrected. Especially was its revival given impetus by the manufacture of textiles, particularly cotton ones, in factories located well away from population centres and thus from major markets. Such circumstances necessitated a middleman to bridge the gap between producer and consumer. For this purpose the dry good stores became ubiquitous in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The subsequent evolution of retailing varied widely from place to place. The small shop continued to exist, particularly for special and quality goods or to serve as a convenience to consumers. There was, however, from early in the nineteenth century a tendency for retail stores, particularly in large cities, to come together in close proximity because of the difficulties of passing through

crowded, narrow streets. In the Near East, for example, individually owned and managed retail shops clustered together under one roof in the famous bazaars. In Russia, retail stores were merged by a single owner and management under one roof, but maintained their own identity. In Western Europe and America, however, one or another of the retail stores, usually a dry goods store, took the lead in gradually diversifying its wares to include almost everything that a middle class society wanted. These were the department stores, the *magasins de nouveautés*, the *Warenhäuser*, such as the Ville de Paris, the Bon Marché, and Le Louvre in Paris, A.T. Stewart's Marble Palace in New York, and later Wertheim's in Berlin. These stores not only diversified their merchandise lines, but introduced new practices, like charging fixed prices, establishing credit accounts, home deliveries, and mail order services. They became so important that they attracted the attention of writers, like Emile Zola (*Au Bonheur des Dames*, 1883), and of some economic historians.

Of the many establishments which were honoured by such consideration, *Le Bon Marché* of Paris was easily the leader. The latest of those who have been drawn to this famous store is Michael B. Miller, who has produced (originally, I believe, a doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania) a book that may be characterized as more sociological than economic — a very interesting combination in the field of business history. The author's main theme is that *Le Bon Marché*, and by inference all department stores, came into being to cater to the "bourgeoisie," a category of very wide dimensions that stretches from the better paid members of the blue-collar class all the way up to the super-rich. The department store provided a relatively easy way to acquire the ever growing range of goods which an improvement in living standards permitted. It was a way of learning what the people up the social scale were purchasing, a place to compare prices, and to buy goods at fixed and reasonable prices.

Professor Miller's story maintains that *the Bon Marché* was given its real character by Aristide Boucicaut, who came to the store in 1852. By this time production of goods on a large scale had become firmly established, transportation in France and to Paris had been greatly developed by the construction of a network of railways radiating from the capital, and the Baron von Haussmann was embarking on his plans for building great arteries within the city to facilitate the movement of traffic. In 1869, when this remodeling of the city was well along, Boucicaut began the building, under the direction of Gustave Eiffel, of the great store on the Rue de Sevres, in close proximity to Boulevards St. Germain and Raspail and the Rue de Varennes, all important centres of upper middle-class people. The store, under the sole ownership after 1863 of Boucicaut, grew rapidly and at the time of his death in 1877 had 1,788 employees. It continued to prosper under a variety of ownerships and managements.

Boucicaut gave *Le Bon Marché* a character which it maintained at least until World War I and even beyond. He regarded his establishment as a great

" family," French style, and imbued it with the concerns, cares, values and behaviour of the French version of this institution. He treated his employees with paternalistic benevolence. He made available to them lunches, concerts, books, fencing lessons, and even sleeping quarters. In return, he expected from his people loyalty and an exemplary deportment. He provided the merchandise which French families wanted and displayed it in a fashion to make shopping interesting and even enjoyable.

All of this our author recounts at considerable length and with a mastery of his material acquired from the records of the store and from French public archives. He even goes into the history of kleptomania, which seems to have been stimulated by the department store because of its methods of making its wares easily available for inspection.

In brief, this is a book of which one should be proud. It has, however, one flaw - not enough care was taken with the writing and/or editing to eliminate gallicisms and to make the discourse flow smoothly.

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A. M. NADA PATRONE, *Il cibo del ricco ed il cibo del povero. Contributo alla storia qualitativa dell'alimentazione*, Centro Studi Piemontesi, Torino 1981, pp. xx, 562.

We cannot agree with the author's claim that it is impossible to write a ' quantitative ' history of medieval diets based on an assessment of the volumes of consumption in relation to biological and nutritional needs. Although the problems involved in making such calculations and applying them to earlier periods of history are well recognised, the difficulties are not such as to preclude all possibility of attempts to reconstruct diets in the past. While care is obviously needed lest we be seduced by the false precision which certain data might offer, this does not mean that any precision is impossible or that certain orders of magnitude, if used with proper caution, cannot provide a better understanding of the problems in question. In other words, we are far from convinced that the author is right when she says, for example, that ' to state that an individual consumed on average somewhere between 560 grammes to a kilogramme of bread a day in fact tells us very little unless we know precisely what type of flour the bread was made of and what the calorific values of the different types of flour used at the time were ' (p. 17). Admittedly the sources are often very vague on such matters, but this total rejection of the possibility of quantitative research is unfounded, since it is inseparable from the qualitative aspects of nutrition and diet: whatever the uncertainties, quantitative research remains crucially important especially since we can never be

entirely sure that the different components of diet have indeed been subject to changes that make all historical comparisons worthless.

Had she taken a more ' quantitative ' approach the author might, for example, have been able to give more conviction to her argument that popular diets considerably improved in the later medieval centuries when in contrast to the predominant role played by vegetables and cereals between the XIth and the early XIVth centuries foodstuffs became more varied, and meat, fruit and fresh vegetables began to make a greater entribution (pp. 447–49). A less exclusively qualitative approach would also have made it easier to differentiate more carefully the nutritional distinctions of the rich and the poor. Although many have been content to reduce the history of diet entirely to this dichotomy, Nada Patrone emphasizes that ' between these two poles of contrasting subsistence conditions there was a whole range and hierarchy of different situations, forming a sort of ladder along which any individual might at different times in his life find himself occupying quite different positions ' (pp. 475–6). It is also true, as she points out, that there were many types of food that were eaten exclusively by the gentry, and others that were used only by humbler folk in accordance with a class-based concept of food to which the doctors of the time gave full scientific support. Yet the social characteristics and distinctions of diet do not in themselves embrace the totality of the problems of food in history and at some point it becomes essential to set these in broader contexts.

Despite the emphasis on the ' qualitative ' aspects of the history of nutrition and diet, this still remains a very valuable study and the particular emphasis serves to define its scope and aims. Leaving aside the physiological and economic aspects of the problems, Nada Patrone is able to concentrate more fully on those aspects of the history of diet which she finds more interesting, but manages even in the excellent section of the book devoted to the ideologies of food to avoid the risk of falling back on mere folk-lore.

The study deals with the Piedmontese provinces in the late Middle Ages, for which the sources are particularly good and are put to good effect. The reliance on official documents possibly gives a rather rosy view of the ways in which local communities dealt with problems of provisioning and public health, but the more exaggerated claims are neatly exposed — for example, it is made clear that hunting regulations, which have often been seen as measures designed to protect ecological balances, bore no relationship to this motive at all at least in so far as Piedmont was concerned.

The main part of the book examines the range of foodstuffs available, which are divided into two groups: animal and vegetable. This grouping has a useful practical consequence and enables the author to explore each item in relation to production, transformation, distribution and consumption, thereby providing a series of cross-references. The picture that emerges reveals the nature of the links between resources and types of consumption and the inter-relationship between the two, which is by no means the least of the book's merits. In addi-

tion the breadth of the information which it contains, together with the excellent index and glossary provided by the author, makes it a very valuable reference source which will considerably add to our knowledge of how and what people ate in the middle ages.

Nada Patrone's command over her material is particularly well evident in her chapter on wine. In this period wine was already widely consumed, although the greater part of production was destined for inferior quality wines, distinguished generically as reds and whites: amongst these, however, it is possible to identify some dozen or so quality wines, and on the basis of organic and chemical features a much wider classification could be attempted. Particular attention is given to the medical properties claimed for the different wines in contemporary literature, and the same sources are used to reconstruct diets and the ways in which different foods were prepared. All in all this is an excellent book whose findings are relevant for an area much wider than that on which it is based. It should provide both a model and an incentive for further studies on this topic which despite the existence now of a number of important contributions still remains laregly unexplored in Italy.

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D. Gioffrè, *Lettere di Giovanni da Pontremoli, mercante genovese. 1453-59*. Genova, Istituto di Paleografia e Storia Medievale dell'Università, 1982, pp. xlviii-264.

Historians will be very grateful to Domenico Gioffrè for making available to them 166 letters of this Genoese merchant who traded in woollen cloth, jewels and at times also in cereals, farmed out the *gabelles* of the bank of S. Giorgio and had little reticence about lending money on interest. He was a middling merchant with two houses, a shop, some land and four slaves in his employ. Some idea of the importance of these documents can be gained from the fact that they constitute the only complete set of commercial correspondence from the Genoese region in the medieval period — surprisingly no others have survived, and there is nothing comparable to the Venetian and Tuscan documentary sources and to the thousands of commercial letters in the Datini archive.

The editor has performed his task with exemplary skill and care. His introduction describes the ways in which the letters throw light on aspects of commercial law, economics and attitudes in the period and draws on wider research to set the merchant himself in fuller perspective. The editor's transcriptions are a real *capo lavoro*: to judge from the facsimiles, the writing is far from easy to interpret, and the greater part of the letters like the majority of Genoese commercial documents and ledgers in the XVth century were still written in Latin. The few letters that Da Pontremoli wrote in the vernacular were brief and obscure, in contrast to the vivacity and expressiveness of his Latin which

he obviously preferred: it was a Latin whose grammatical and syntactical flexibility made it a remote cousin of classical Latin, but as a result of its close ties with the spoken language had gained in expressiveness whatever may have been lost in the way of formal purity. The only criticism is that although Gioffrè has given lengthy indices for the different transcriptions, there is no general index of commodities, weights, measures, currencies — guides which are perhaps even more important than the indices of names and places for documents of this sort.

The correspondence begins in 1453 and the first letters bear news of the fall of Constantinople which had reached Genoa by way of Venice '*et peius quod quasi omnes trucidati fuerunt*'. The period covered is relatively short but it does include the struggles between the Fregoso faction and the exiles which dominated the years between 1455-8, as well as the outbreak of plague in 1458. Most of the letters were destined for the Barbary states (56), a smaller number for the Levant (26), for Corsica (23) and Sicily (18), where the merchant had numerous agents working on his behalf who formed the threads of a network of commercial contacts that was centred on Genoa. In return, Da Pontremoli also bought and sold on his agents' behalf in Ligurian markets, charging a certain percentage for his services. There are only a couple of instances in which these contacts took on the form of a partnership, which Gioffrè describes with reference to what is in our view the unduly generic term of *commenda*. The trade with North Africa consisted mainly of the sale of cloth in return for cereals, leather, wax, and of course gold. Woollen cloth of Ligurian, Flemish, English, Florentine and Lombard origin was also sold at Chio, but trade with the Levant was more difficult and Genoa had scanty supplies of silk, dyes and spices: in 1458 Da Pontremoli wrote — '*hic mercatur nisi de grano et vino*'. Genoa was one of the main centres of the Mediterranean grain trade and even when the letters do not contain references of more specific interest they still contain valuable information on prices and market trends. But in a short review such as this it is almost impossible to do justice to the wealth of information provided in this book. It will make an important contribution, from a relatively rare perspective, to our understanding of Genoese commerce in the years of reorganization that followed the fall of Constantinople.

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P. Robertson, *An Experience of Women: Pattern and Change in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982. pp. 673.

Priscilla Robertson's *An Experience of Women: Pattern and Change in Nineteenth-Century Europe* is an awesomely ambitious project. Her research covers four countries, England, France, Germany, and Italy. Few other historians

can work with original materials from all of these countries. Few other historians can bring together into one volume such rich materials that afford us this opportunity to compare and contrast the lives of nineteenth-century women in different countries.

Robertson has divided the book into two parts: the first, " The Pattern," describes the normative life style of upper-middle-class and upper-class women. Robertson focuses here almost exclusively on family-life matters since, typically, a woman's life was circumscribed within the boundaries of the family circle. The second part of the book, " Breaking the Pattern," describes the many ways that exceptional women enlarged the boundaries of their lives. These included organized struggles such as efforts to increase educational opportunities and the women's rights movements, but also more personal rebellions such as those we associate with Georges Sand.

An Experience of Women is social history of a rather old-fashioned sort; for example, Robertson uses literary sources and shies away from statistical data. Readers of the *Journal of European Economic History* will consult this work more for background information than for new material on the economic history of women. They will be interested both in Robertson's sweeping generalizations and in her detailed descriptions of women's everyday lives. They will find much material that is new and that has never been published in English (or oftentimes, in French, Italian, or German either). Of particular interest are the chapters on sexual knowledge and sexual initiation of girls and boys, on marital intimacy, and similarly, the chapters comparing courtship customs, all of which make clear the connections between seemingly personal matters and such " larger " issues as household formation, accumulation of wealth, and inheritance patterns.

The strength of the book are many: Robertson's sweeping generalizations are oftentimes illuminating. She is convincing that rebellious individualists and in particular sexual radicals were tolerated more in France than in England, but that young, unmarried English girls were afforded more independence and autonomy than their sisters across the Channel. Italian males' ties to their mothers resulted in their greater appreciation of mature women, so different from Michelet's girlish ideal. Still, the married woman in France has more power than either the German frau or the English lady. The French dowry system may have resulted in mis-matches some of the time, but it seems sometimes also to have empowered women since family wealth was so often their wealth. I appreciated most the biographical information about scores of fascinating women—Hortense Allart, Marie d'Agoult, Juliette Adam, Rahel Varnhagen, Fanny Lewald, Lily Braun, Anna Maria Mozzoni, Maria Montessori, Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, Emily Davies, Florence Nightingale, and so many, many more. However celebrated there women are, there is actually little information about them that is readily available to general readers. Robertson's book provides a real service.

The weaknesses of the book relate to its strengths. Although Robertson's research is overwhelming, it is by no means exhaustive, and specialists in any one of the many areas that Robertson covers will come across factual errors. This is certainly true of her chapter on the history of French feminism. See p. 286, for example: Monsieur de Mauchamps was indeed the power behind the *Gazette des Femmes* (Madame Herbinot de Mauchamps was illiterate). Jeanne Deroin published her *Almanach des Femmes* in England where she lived in exile from 1851 (see p. 291). Robertson has confused the radical Vesuviennes with the more moderate women of the *Voix des Femmes* group (p. 289). There are in fact other sources for Suzanne Voilquin's tale, especially her letters in the archives of the Bibliotheque de l'Arsenal (p. 196). And Jenny d'Héricourt did indeed live into the 1870s (p. 300).

But most problematical for me was Robertson's description of the class of the women about whom she writes. She says they are significantly more wealthy than the middle-class women of Patricia Branca's *Silent Sisterhood.* (Unlike Branca's "middle-class women," Robertson's women direct households with several servants). Furthermore, Roberston says that this is the class of women that organized the European women's movements. But this was the case only in Italy. Elsewhere, women's rights' activists were not so wealthy. In France, for example, Maria Deraismes was quite rich but she was exceptional; more typical were the many schoolteachers whom Edith Thomas has called the "decently dressed proletariat." The Appendix, "Demography and Feminism," by Steve Hochstadt compounds the problem. Hochstadt shows that the demographic patterns of the upper classes — particularly of the English peerage (but not a larger sample labelled "English upper classes") and of the Genevan *haute bourgeoisie* — differed from those of the other classes by having a later age of first marriage, a greater disparity between husbands' and wives' ages, and a longer life expectancy. He connects the emergence of feminism among upper-class women to their sense of "powerlessness" and "worldly uselessness" (p. 551), consequences of their marriages of more than typical inequality and of a longer number of years after childbearing was completed. It's an interesting hypothesis but it doesn't work: feminism was not a movement of the English peerage nor of the Genevan *haute bourgeoisie.*

Perhaps it is unfair to complain that Robertson has not read enough: she has certainly read extensively but she has read too narrowly. Notably absent from her bibliography are recent secondary works in women's history and archival materials from those organized women's groups which Robertson has described. These other sources would challenge interpretations and correct errors which Robertson derives from her reading of memoirs and literary sources.

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J. THIRSK, *English Peasant Farming*, London, Methuen, 1982, pp. 350.

When the work under review first appeared, in 1957, it broke new ground — if the metaphor is permissible — in the study of British agrarian history. Instead of being based on the ideals of didactic scribes and on the unwarranted generalization of the activities of individual innovators and gentry " dabblers " in husbandry, Dr. Thirsk investigated the actual farming practices of ordinary farmers. For this purpose she utilized extensive archival records, for which Lincolnshire is a county more blessed than most, and the State Papers Domestic; to which sampling and basic statistical techniques were applied.

The techniques employed were rudimentary to say the least and the products, in many cases, could not conceivably support the conclusions based upon them. The samples of inventories averaged to produce a ' median ' farmer, for a period of up to 70 years, are on occasions less than 10. Arguably, in any case the attempt to define a median farmer, even within a regional subdivision of Lincolnshire, is an exercise in futility. We are informed, for example, that the median farmer on the uplands in the XVIth century possessed 9 cattle, 5 horses, 6 pigs and 34 sheep. The range, in the inventories utilized, was from one cow to 80 cattle and from one to 40 horses.

Nevertheless, at the time Dr. Thirsk's work was a step up from Ernle's farmers who, ' in the long winter evenings ', together with ' their sons, and their servants carved the wooden spoons, the platters and the beechen bowls '. However, it is somewhat deceptive to title a work on farming in a single county, which is largely devoted to the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, ' English Peasant Farming '. It is also to be regretted that it has been decided to simply reprint the edition of 1957. This ignores the abundant published research on Lincolnshire agrarian history that has been published in the interim: not least by Dr. Thirsk herself.

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