Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

John A. Marino. *Pastoral Economics in the Kingdom of Naples*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. pp. xii, 381.

This is a formidable work containing a vast amount of information on the history of the *Dogana* or Customs house of the kingdom of Naples, the institution through which the crown controlled transhumance of all animals in South Italy. Indeed the *dogana* was central to the general economy of much of the kingdom, since through it the crown could to some extent control how much land was devoted to grain production and how much to pastoralism. It was the major source of crown revenue, theoretically raising taxes on all sheep in the Regno. Marino, aiming at "total history" in the tradition of the Annales school, deals with the *Dogana* in its social, economic and political contexts, showing the interrelationships between them. He emphasises that the *Dogana* was, from its inception in the fifteenth century, a capitalistic enterprise in as much as it was a large scale, profit-oriented organization of state control of transhumant pastoralism was much older and was dictated as much by a concern for good government as for the maximisation of profits. Hence a perennial tension in the organization as the authorities tried to maintain the ideals of equality of treatment and opportunity for all members of the *Dogana* while, at the same time, inevitably responding to the demands of the wealthy, to ordinary market pressures and to the need to make a profit from doganal taxation.

Among the most pressing problems confronting the officers of the *Dogana* was how to maintain a balance between agriculture and pastoralism. A tendency to favour the latter arose partly from an ideology of pastoralism somewhat influenced by its literary image which, as the author insists, hardly reflected either the harsh realities of a shepherd's life or the sophistication of some sheep owners and even shepherds.

The book deals extensively with the organization of the *dogana*. It sorts out the details of some of the more peculiar doganal practices—for example that of encouraging sheep owners to ensure adequate pasture in time of shortage by declaring and paying tax on more sheep than they really had; or the *voce* price system whereby an official price for wool and other products was set and paid in advance to the producers (in effect a kind of concealed loan), a system which became almost standard in the late seventeenth century.

A substantial part of the book deals with the effect of the Dogana on the general economy of the kingdom of Naples. The profitability of the dogana fluctuated and latterly, as the population of Naples rose, its monopoly became very harmful to the prosperity of the kingdom generally; but it always brought in sufficient profit to the crown to make its abolition unlikely. It also, by its very nature, encouraged corruption in the administration despite the efforts to eliminate this, and the author traces in some detail the attempted reforms and the forces working against them throughout its history.

One section of the book is devoted to the sale of pastoral products, and the profits made from this. The main markets were in northern Italy, with Venice the most important buyer. Locally the sale of pastoral products was channelled through the fair of Foggia and the records of this supply the author with a mine of fascinating information on the economics of this aspect of South Italian sheep raising. The book concludes with a section on opinions of critics writing for and against pastoralism in South Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, setting them in the context of changing ideas of political economy generally.

In a book which contains so much useful material, it may seem churlish to ask for more. There are, however, a few points which need to be dealt with more fully in what claims to be a complete study of south Italian pastoralism. Marino concentrates rather excessively on the main grazing grounds of the Tavoliere and the most important graziers, the Abruzzesi. He makes it clear that there were doganal pastures away from the Tavoliere, but we get very little idea of how this part of the system worked. There were various "overflow" pastures in Basilicata in addition to some which were used regularly, notably at Monte Sellicole. But there were also numbers of sheep which migrated between the hills and the Metapontine plain. The owners of these, after considerable argument, bought what was in effect exemption from the Dogana for an annual payment of 3000 ducats. (G. Racioppi, *Storia dei popoli della Lucania e della Basilicata*, vol. 2, Rome, 1899, pp. 220-222.) though they were still supposed to declare their sheep until the mid-eighteenth century; and even this caused resentment. Marino does not quite ignore the "transazione di Basilicata" but his treatment of it is so cursory as to be almost misleading and he says nothing about a similar one for Montepeloso (Irsina). These are perhaps minor points (the numbers of sheep in Basilicata were small compared with those using the Tavoliere and the stations linked with it) but the effect is to make the account seem rather one-sided. Similarly the competition for the Abruzzi sheep posed by the papal Dogana dei pascoli is barely discussed, though the early Neapolitan kings made efforts, not wholly successful, to lure graziers from outside the kingdom to their own pastures, presumably to the detriment of the papal institution. (A. Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous*. Oxford, 1976, pp. 361-2)

The other main lacuna lies in any discussion on the proprietors of the land allocated as pasture to the sheep owners and shepherds. Much of this land was royal

patrimony but other land was in baronial hands or formed part of church estates. The owners received rent for it but, on the usual pastures, the dogana had complete control over its allocation. In times of high demand, the dogana could also allocate land normally held by the barons for their own use. The author indicates that this led to tension between landowners and the dogana, but gives no real discussion of the issues involved.

The problem of baronial tolls also needs to be discussed. These were disliked by the royal authorities, and in the sixteenth century orders were issued to eliminate many illegal tolls. (G. Galanti, *Nuova descrizione storica e geografica delle Sicilie*, Naples, 1788, vol. 2, p. 381) These, however, had to be repeated later, so the tolls obviously remained a problem. Moreover, some were legal and constituted part of the declared income of a fief in the sixteenth century. (Account of the estate of Gravina publ. N. Cortese, "Feudi e feudatari napoletani della prima metà del Cinquecento," *Archive Storico delle provincie Napoletane*, 1930, p. 59 ff. on tolls raised on animals going to the Murge through Garagnone.) Some assessment of how far these were a factor in the economy of transhumant sheep rearing would have been in order.

In all, then, the main criticism of the book is that it concentrates perhaps excessively on the mechanisms and accounts of the dogana itself and on the records conserved in Foggia and Simancas—an understandable bias in view of the dispersed nature of the other Italian evidence since the destruction of the Archive at Naples, but one that might have been made a little clearer in, at least, a sub-title. Another improvement in the title would be some dates. There is very little here (three pages) on pastoralism prior to the establishment of the Dogana in 1447.

The book is densely packed with information and its style does not lend itself to easy reading. It contains several infelicities—what, for example, does "the Saccione above or Barletta below Puglia" mean? Some of the tables, particularly those on the credits and debits of the Dogana could have been more precise, both in date (it would have been useful to have fluctuations in the doganal budget over the whole period presented in tabular form) and in categories of expenditure and receipt. But these are minor problems in a book as useful and interesting as this one. A more serious flaw is the lack of a bibliography. There are 58 pages of endnotes which indicate that the author has done an immense amount of reading but, though second citations refer the reader to the first and full citation, later ones do not, so that a good deal of the utility of the reference material is lost to all but the most painstaking reader. No doubt the publishers are responsible for this omission but it was a serious error.

That said, however, this is an admirable book and the sheer volume and erudition of what it does contain make it an important contribution to the history of South Italy.

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