

tured goods. But cereals, as essential, high calorie foods climb steeply off the page as the century wears on. In sixteenth century Austria for example wages remained constant, manufactured goods rose by one quarter, whilst cereal prices increased by an average of two and a half times. Even so, Abel reckons that a building worker at the end of the sixteenth century could still earn in a full day's work the equivalent of 23,000 calories of rye, pease or beans. If he used his wages to buy meat and dairy products, then he only earned enough to purchase 7,000 calories.<sup>5</sup> Abel concluded from this that, although meat prices did not rise, they remained beyond the reach of ordinary family budgets. However much cereal prices rose, flour products were still the best buy in calorific terms. The more that cereal prices rose, so the less the labourer and his dependents could afford to buy anything else.

But the problem is not so much to trace the depressing decline of real wages, in early modern times, as to question how this decline came about, and indeed whether the working family was really quite well off in the fifteenth century before this decline was firmly under way. It is here that we now require thorough demographic studies of the local and regional evidence from German social historians. Abel has opened the way with his fruitful and provocative statements about declining living standards. Spengler thought that the early modern European population growth rate was slow enough for industrial take-off. Abel thinks that it was still too fast to be able effectively to prevent underemployment, rise in prices and relative fall in wages. Who is right? We do not as yet know. That is why Abel's book is so important to bring to the notice of social historians in general, for it is hoped that Abel's hypotheses will encourage a new school of demography that will look at pre-industrial problems of prices, wages and production in relationship to population as a resource in its own right, and not bother so much about getting its predictions right for growth take-off into later industrialisation and capital.

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INGOMAR Bog, ed. — *Der Aussenhandel Ostmitteleuropas 1450-1650*. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1971.

In 1967 a symposium was organized by Professor Bog at the Institute of Economic and Social History at Marburg/Lahn, Federal Republic of Germany, to inquire into the trade relations and organization of early modern east-central and central Europe. This book publishes the papers presented at that meeting. It is subtitled *The economies of east-central Europe in their relations with central Europe*. By east-central Europe is meant Poland, Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia. By central Europe is meant the territories of the early modern German Empire, from Vienna and the Alpine lands, through to Nuremberg and up to the Baltic.

There are 27 articles in all from Hungarian, Polish, Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, West German and Austrian specialists. Two articles are in French, the rest in the German language. East Europeans have made all but five of the contributions.

Ingomar Bog outlines five broad areas of research in an otherwise far too brief introduction. Under examination are (1) export trade balances between the territories of early modern east-central and central Europe (essays 1-5); (2) central markets in the east-west exchange of goods (essays 6-11, 17-19); (3) trading commodities and transport routes (essays 12-16); (4) cattle trade, its routes, organization and volume, as well as social reper-

<sup>5</sup> ABEL, *Massenarmut*, pp. 22-5, 33.

cussions on producers (essays 20-23); (5) Hungarian-Slovakian mining and copper trade (essays 24-27).

There is so much new material here that we will restrict ourselves to a select few of these articles, by taking up the case of Hungary, which, with nine contributions, has received the largest coverage of any country. The other articles are just as important, but in view of the editor's inadequate introduction it is necessary to select some detailed points for criticism, in the hope that the reader himself will then turn to the book and give it the full attention it deserves.

Erik Fügedi (pp. 56-85) examines the customs and excise records of north and south-east Hungary at the opening of the sixteenth century. He uses the sources to revise the view that Hungary had a trade deficit as late as the mid-fifteenth century, which was to have turned into a large surplus one generation later. Fügedi is unhappy about this alleged rapid change, which he feels unable to account for, due to *lacunæ* in the source material, and he leaves the matter open to further comparative research into late medieval and early modern trading balances of neighbouring states (p. 79).

Gyöző Ember (pp. 86-104) takes up the question of Hungarian trade balances for the 1540s, in the era of firm Turkish domination over the wealthier two-thirds of the Kingdom. Ember is daring, giving us the results of estimated macro-surveys into all aspects of Hungarian trade. He claims an enormously favourable balance with the West (Germany/Austria and Bohemia/Moravia) for mid-sixteenth century Hungary, based especially on the cattle and copper trades. Hungarian exports were up to twice as lucrative as imports. Hungarians controlled over two-thirds of the country's import and export trade themselves.

Whereas Fügedi has perhaps been over-cautious in his generalizations from diligently presented archive evidence, Ember is grandly expansive and leaves us guessing at his sources (but see the tantalising footnote reference on p. 104). Fügedi is unsatisfactory in his results, but as a researcher into late medieval and early modern economic records he is sensitive and ultimately convincing. Ember is comfortingly plausible with his long tables of results, if only one could believe any of it. What is implied here is that for the economic development of the greater part of plain-land Hungary the Turkish invasion and conquest of 1526 was no hindrance to Hungarian trade with the West. This trade was buoyant and growing, notwithstanding Habsburg, Papal and Christian war propaganda to the contrary.

Othmar Pickl (pp. 320-341), in a mainly descriptive piece, looks at three aspects of the Lower and Inner Austrian trade-routes, notably with Bohemia-Moravia to the North of Vienna; to the South with Venice; and to the East via Wiener-Neustadt to Western Hungary. Whereas Hungarian occupation of the Vienna basin tended to disrupt the city's entrepôt trade in the era of Mathias Corvinus in the later fifteenth century, simultaneous Hungarian control of Wiener-Neustadt to the South just inside Inner Austria, tended to improve trade and prosperity. Wiener-Neustadt became the staple and customs post (*Dreissigstamt*) for regional Austrian and Hungarian wines.

The new town expanded too rapidly in the early years of the sixteenth century, although through the credit operations of its leading wine merchants, the firm of Funk, we are endowed with the earliest substantial Austrian commercial records. In the years of the worst Turkish incursions between 1527-33, the value of goods they transacted on credit terms fell catastrophically by over ninety per cent. Hungarian export trade to this vital part of Inner Austria had collapsed, and the result was the transfer of capital by Inner Austrian patricians to towns like Nuremberg (pp. 334-7).

A generation later we find that this had been compensated for by a drastic shift well to the south of the Vienna-Wiener-Neustadt region of cattle trade from Hungary to Venice,

along the route Pettau (Ptuj)-Cilli-Laibach (Ljubljana)-Görz (Gorizia), although Vienna continued to be used for cattle to South Germany. Between 1577-83 over 120,000 cattle passed the south-west Hungarian customs posts on the way to Italy. The new wealth in cattle-ranching replaced the old wine staple. But once again, by 1600, Inner Austria was living off a Hungarian export handling trade, just as a century previously.

Laszlo Makkai devotes a whole article (pp. 483-506) to the Hungarian cattle-trade between 1550-1650, which he sees as the most important sector of Hungarian export until mid-eighteenth century. Crudely speaking, for this period — for Poland, read grain: for Hungary, cattle. Makkai estimates that over two million beef-cattle were reared on the Hungarian plains in the second half of the sixteenth century, of which five to ten per cent (about 100-200,000 head) were exported annually. The European (notably Croat) cow-boys drove them mainly to the markets of the West, via Bohemia, Moravia and Austria to Germany and Italy, where Vienna, Nuremberg and Venice acted as the chief markets and slaughter-houses.

Pavel Horvath retraces the South-Slovakian export route (pp. 507-513), and Miloslav Belohlavek reckons that up to 20,000 head of cattle a year passed the customs post at Pilsen (Plzen) in Bohemia on the way to Nuremberg in Franconia (pp. 514-524).

Most of the articles contain new material of a descriptive sort, as very briefly indicated above. They are of great importance to a preliminary understanding of east-central Europe to those of us who only have western languages. For east-central Europe greatly helped to feed the cities of the West and Centre of the Continent, also providing considerable mineral wealth that could keep a ring of German, Austrian and Italian towns markedly wealthy. Two articles of interest in an analytical sense that may be further noted by way of an ending are — Joseph Vozar (pp. 569-583), "The social consequences of mining for the population of the middle-Slovak region in the sixteenth century," and Franz Lerner (pp. 147-184), "The Imperial town of Frankfurt-am-Main and its fairs in relation to East and South-east Europe, 1480-1630."

This is an important introductory volume for the general student of early modern Europe, but the Editor has done little to help readers find a coherent way through it. There are no clear themes and each article has to be read as if it were written almost independently in a regular journal. But perseverance will be amply rewarded.

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### *Stone's English Aristocracy*

LAWRENCE STONE. — *Family and Fortune: Studies in Aristocratic Finance in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

The author who gave us our noblest study of English aristocracy now offers us an engaging new book, *Family and Fortune*, as a "coda" to his earlier volume. The new book "focuses exclusively upon financial history, and... organizes the material chronologically around individual families, rather than analytically around general themes" as its predecessor did. It offers case histories "to demonstrate the practical working of the general theories" of the earlier work and believes its results support "the fundamental findings of the former book" (*Family and Fortune*, pp. xv-xvii).

The work which stands *in loco parentis* to this new volume is a study of vast scope and deep learning, attempting nothing less than the description of the total environment of the English aristocracy in the century leading up to the modern English Civil War. "Economic, political, legal, social and intellectual" developments are all included. The