

Jacques Petitjean ROGET, ed. — *L'histoire de l'isle de Grenada en Amérique 1649-1659*. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1975.

When the Jesuits of Paris closed their Sainte-Geneviève school, in compliance with the 1901 law on associations, an anonymous history of Grenada which lay in their library disappeared from view. To be sure, a copy existed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, but it was somewhat illegible, and eluded many scholars. It is a happy occasion that the original manuscript, having recently come into private hands, now appears in published form with a fine introduction and first-rate annotations on persons, places and things, by Jacques Petitjean Roget.

The author, most probably, was Bénique Bresson, a contemporary of the "Herodotus of the French Antilles," Jean-Baptiste du Tertre. The writing of history by these two Dominican fathers differed greatly. Du Tertre, who served in Guadeloupe and Martinique, took the entire Caribbean area as his theatre for French activity. He offered a well-ordered narrative; cited incidents in measured language; proclaimed himself objective; and incorporated innumerable documents into his four stout volumes. Bresson, on the other hand, concentrated mainly on the one island where he had laboured as a missionary and been caught up in the constant swirl of affairs. Though he did not arrive until 1656, he leaned for the earlier story on reliable testimony and texts. Using the first and third persons interchangeably, he recounted events in naked words, with periodic ramblings into Biblical and Roman history that Roget has largely omitted. He characterized men unsparingly, leaving little doubt as to his stand; and he occasionally reproduced sources such as Valmémier's 1654 commission as governor.

Bresson's work is valuable on several counts. First, it is an insider's view of the first decade of French occupation. It is replete with details, whether on the landing of the first settlers, the coming of the first women, or the birth of the first child. It dwells at length on the nature of French and Indian relations. Almost at the outset, the French, who professed their aims to be fishing and the prevention of English incursions, expanded outside of the *carré* mutually agreed upon. The Indians reacted with all the means at their disposal. The misunderstandings, skirmishes, and massacres that resulted from the faithlessness of the French leaders in particular, make for sad reading. Bresson is never more vivid than when he describes the fury of the aborigines on finding themselves at one point tricked by Valmémier out of two runaway Negro slaves, who were eventually put to work with others owned by the French. Small wonder there were three wars between 1650 and 1659, one of which lasted four years, and threatened the depopulation of the French. But, other themes engage the author. In exposing the power struggles that went on among the local French, Bresson's portrait of governor François Du Bu ("criminal... blaspHEME... tryant... public sinner...") conveys pure Machievellianism. It renders all the more understandable the revolt against him in 1659 — instigated perhaps by Bresson — that brought Du Bu's trial and death by a firing squad.

Second, Bresson's history further illuminates the interrelationships of the Caribs of Grenada and those of the Windward islands of St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Dominica (notably the role of the latter's famous "Indian Warner.") Third, it provides a corrective to du Tertre and later writers who accepted his facts. Du Parquet of Martinique clearly took possession of Grenada in March 1649 and not June 1650. Roget explains why Du Tertre advanced the date. Du Tertre took pains to controvert the Protestant César de Rochefort who stated in his *Histoire naturelle et morale des [...] Antilles* that the Caribs resisted the taking of Grenada. Bresson's pages confirm Rochefort. Du Tertre claimed to know nothing about Du

Bu's conduct or crimes. Bressen is explicit. In sum, this is a lively, instructive, and welcome account.

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R.L. MEEK. — *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*. Cambridge, 1976.

This is the most interesting and best written book that this reviewer has encountered in some time. It uses the vehicle of intellectual history to explore the nature and implications of a recurring paradigm of social science; the stages theory of economic development. In this theory the general condition of any civilization is seen to be determined, in a gross materialistic sense, by the means it uses to provide itself with subsistence. The "most backward" (poorest, least technically and culturally sophisticated) civilization is seen to be dependent on hunting and the "most progressive", on manufacturing and/or commerce. While the discussion in the book is confined to the four stages presented in late eighteenth century literature; the hunting, herding, agricultural and commercial stages; the main lines of the argument are quite relevant to the two additional stages, the manufacturing and service stages, that are included in current versions of the paradigm.

Without once dropping the illusion that what is being accomplished is a thorough, objective perusal of the literature, Professor Meek explores the weaknesses and problems of the paradigm as it appears in its eighteenth century versions. These are principally: the difficulty of empirical verification of the sequence of the stages, since they often co-existed in one civilization; and the difficulty of explaining the transition from one stage to another, since some civilizations, unaccountably, did not make the postulated transitions at all, or made them in a different sequence.

The main thrust of his argument, however, is not to criticize the paradigm, but to justify a revision of it, and to defend that revision against criticisms arising from nineteenth century neo-classical economics. According to Professor Meek the economic theories of the nineteenth century were an explanation of only the commercial stage of development, in which society was organized by a process of division of tasks and exchange in a money-market system. In his view, therefore, the use of that theory to explain earlier stages and their evolution into greater wealth and sophistication was an unwarranted projection of then current conditions into the past. Indeed, it implied by pure assumption that there were no stages in development. Everything was the fourth stage. The proper revision, according to Meek, was the Marxist version of the paradigm in which the four stages of development were retained in more or less classical form, and the structure of property rights, the "mode of production", was used as the dynamic and determining factor in the definition of stages and the mechanism of transition from one to another. This Marxist revision is not extensively elaborated by Professor Meek, however, and at the end of the book it is itself left in the form of a merely tentative, sufficing, plausibility.

Whatever one may think of the conclusion of this book it remains a delightfully subtle exposition of a rather important piece of the intellectual apparatus of social science. Further, it should be of special interest to Canadian scholars, since the recent debate in Canada over the explanatory value of the Staple Theory (Douglas North and the quantitative historians on the one side and Melville Wat-