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## **The Undevelopment of Capitalism: Sectors and Markets in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany**

Laura Ikins Stern

Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Volume 41, Number 1, Summer 2010, pp. 144-146 (Review)

Published by The MIT Press



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men's. Widows' claims for their dowries met with delays and eventual payouts only loosely related at times to the contractual amounts, but courts enforced those claims, just as they enforced testamentary clauses putting widows in charge of their minor children.

The second part of the book rests on the study of several hundred testaments of middling sorts of people—artisans, merchants, and professionals—who were neither wealthy nor, conversely, poor and thus unconcerned with transmission. As testaments worked modifications on the usual rules of transmission, this section is less about law and more about choices, but within legal and societal expectations. Bellavitis separates the testaments of men from those of women, thus allowing her to show in each class how women shifted their property by a particularized sense of needs and relationships in both natal and marital families.

In each chapter, Bellavitis provides statistical tables of heirs and executors of different types of testators. The total numbers are not large. The major difficulty is the lack of a single table in each chapter to present a statistical overview. That said, Bellavitis succeeds in showing how these classes in which women worked—often as part of a family shop, with dowries more constitutive of the household—used the same legal devices that patricians used in different ways to suit their interests and needs. Modest artisans or merchants had little need or sense to devising the kind of multigenerational substitutions that were essential in patricians wills, though they used them from time to time. Men and women of these classes left bequests to illegitimates, relatives, and favorite charities. Merchants' wills sought to prevent morcelization of estates that underlay family-based firms. Testators who were notaries or officials were concerned to transmit not only property but also a nonmaterial inheritance of education and comportment.

Bellavitis' sense of generational transmission is properly expansive. Beyond the settlement of property on survivors (or determining which among them received what), the transmission of social responsibilities, family roles, and education were at stake in drawing up a testament, as Bellavitis is able to show only because she first lays out the norms of intestate succession and family membership. She has both added social nuance and context to Venetian history and a useful pattern of analysis to be taken to other early modern societies, in and out of Italy.

Thomas Kuehn  
Clemson University

*The Undevelopment of Capitalism: Sectors and Markets in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany.* By Rebecca Jean Emigh (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2009) 271 pp. \$89.50 cloth 29.95 paper

Emigh's *The Undevelopment of Capitalism*, explains why fifteenth-century Florence did not develop into a capitalist manufacturing economy and

society despite propitious conditions. This excellent book is the culmination and synthesis of years of building-block studies by this author. The first half of the book is a veritable textbook on the tools that sociology can bring to bear on the study of history to yield maximum understanding—something that George Homans' famous book applying sociology to history, *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (New York, 1941), is not. Despite this huge apparatus of theory, the book is not overburdened because Emigh tersely and directly evaluated the sources of theory and tightly cross-referenced chapters and sections throughout the book to avoid repetition.

The second half of the book examines economic factors in Tuscany, such as the great difference in wealth between city and *contado*, the growing predominance of sharecropping (*mezzadria*), the buying up of land in the *contado* by wealthy Florentines, and the loss of control over agricultural management by the workers of the land. She concludes that despite the profits of agriculture being invested in the cities, capitalism and manufacturing did not develop in Florence because urban markets overpowered rural markets and destroyed them. She does not blame this condition on the retrogressive nature of sharecropping, which she finds to have been profitable for landowners and sharecroppers alike, but on the collapse of rural markets.

Any criticisms aimed at this book should be considered minor. Undervalued in the book, however, is the motivation of all Florentines, rich and poor, to secure a steady supply of grain and other necessary commodities, and the concomitant need to secure a steady supply of land and labor, especially if the grain regulations were not working. Yet, whether or not it hurt rich Florentines in the pocketbook to fix the price of grain, starvation and food riots were worth avoiding. Whole bureaucratic institutions were involved in this effort, institutions that had a long history in the Roman *annona*. Regardless of how useful the controls on necessary commodities were, the best assurance of a steady grain supply in trying times was the ownership of grain fields for the rich or the availability of land to work for the poor. Furthermore, Emigh could have paid more attention to the effect of the plagues on labor/landowner relations. As landowners vied to attract the remaining laborers, they offered better inducements, such as loans of grain, animals, and money. A grain loan could mean a great deal to a poor grain buyer who found himself buying grain just before harvest when grain prices were at their highest. *Mezzadria* contracts could be initiated with those who owned nothing. Lastly, it is unfortunate that Emigh's quintessential landowning family, as dictated by the extant primary sources, needs to be the Medici, who were *sui generis* in both wealth and power in Florence.

Emigh presents compelling arguments about how loans of grain, animals, and money at the beginning of a tenure represented investments in the land and not the creation of debts of bondage. Likewise, her discussion of the knowledge that wealthy Florentines had about

farming and managing their land rings true from the evidence of existing mezzadria contracts in a private account book. *The Undevelopment of Capitalism* is an important book, destined to become a classic.

Laura Ikins Stern  
University of North Texas

*Du Bien Commun au Mal Nécessaire: Tyrannies, Assassinats Politiques, et Souveraineté en Italie, vers 1470–vers 1600.* By Renaud Villard (Rome, École française de Rome, 2008) 912 pp. 88.35

Villard's book is a masterful study of Italian political, diplomatic, and intellectual history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Geographically, his "Italy" excludes regions south of the Papal States, Piedmont in the north, and only occasionally refers to Venice, enabling him to focus on the regions most applicable to this study. In structure, he considers traditional republics, principalities, and ecclesiastical states. As implied by the title, Villard moves chronologically from fifteenth-century tyranny to methods of removing tyrants and the ability of rulers by the late sixteenth century to transform possible actions against them into opportunities to strengthen their sovereign position.

The mid-fifteenth century concept of tyrant depicted a ruler who paid no attention to sound counsel, overtaxed the population, and succumbed to insatiable sexual desires frequently rumored to be homosexual. Rivals for power made frequent references to the role of Brutus in the assassination of Caesar that often inspired crowds (occasionally assisted by imported mercenaries) to mutilate tyrants and slaughter their families. Villard presents account after account of such scenes. Yet, they were not the only result of such plots. Occasionally, rulers could strike first and bring plotters to justice. Naturally, this kind of success confirmed God's protection and endorsement. In some cases, it even inspired rulers to "invent" false plots in order to remove other potential threats to his authority.

Villard observes the transition from a total rejection of a tyrant's authority to its acceptance in many cases as a necessary evil, during the sixteenth century, to protect the populace from the alternative of mob rule. It is only a short step further to the notion of an obligation to obey a tyrant regardless of his shortcomings to maintain God's political order. Not surprisingly, the term *tyrant* was increasingly replaced in political discourse by the much less offensive term *prince*. Violence did not come to an end, but princes tended to employ it most often to keep the peace. By the end of the century, the concept of "*raison d'État*" sufficed to justify a sovereign's actions.

That Villard's methodology derives from a combination of traditional political history, diplomatic history, and intellectual history is hardly surprising in a study dealing with developments in Renaissance