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## Review of The Gypsies of Early Modern Spain, 1425-1783, by R.J. Pym

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conclusion more in favor of the "failed state" analysis of Irish republicans. Such considerations apart, though, this magnificent book is one that no serious practitioner of modern Irish history can afford not to read.

JAMES H. MURPHY  
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RICHARD J. PYM. *The Gypsies of Early Modern Spain, 1425–1783*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2007. Pp. xiv, 219. \$69.95.

Richard J. Pym's new book is an important addition to the scholarship on marginalized groups in early modern Spain. Previous studies of this topic have been limited by their focus on a particular region or period. Pym has remedied this with a study of chronological breadth that seeks to tie together evidence from various parts of the Iberian Peninsula.

Yet such a study of gypsies in Spain is both ambitious and methodologically fraught. As Pym acknowledges, we have no records from the gypsies themselves. They are only visible to the historian through the commentary of others, such as the *procuradores* (representatives to the Cortes), writers like Miguel de Cervantes, and the authors of various treatises. These mostly elite sources typically viewed the gypsy population as a problem that needed to be solved.

Bearing these limitations in mind, Pym is nonetheless able to craft a compelling analysis of the gypsy presence in Spain over the course of four centuries. Pym begins with the first recorded mention of the gypsies in Spain—a letter of safe conduct issued by the king of Aragon in 1425. In this period the gypsies were a largely peripatetic group, moving into Western Europe, perhaps seeking to blend in with Christian pilgrims. Gradually, however, this itinerant population began to settle in the peninsula. Pym argues that localized relations between non-gypsies and gypsies were marked by *convivencia*, a state of mostly peaceful coexistence, with intermittent periods of tension and conflict.

Elite sources, in Pym's telling, betray the *convivencia* of people's daily experiences. From almost the start, the gypsies were the target of restrictive legislation and negative literary stereotyping. The evolving Spanish nation-state of the early modern period employed various means to contain and control the gypsy population. The overarching concerns of all of this legislation were the itinerancy and cultural distinctiveness of the gypsies. Ferdinand and Isabel, concerned about the purported alms begging and vagabondage of the gypsies, issued an ordinance in 1499 designed to make the gypsies serve one master and become less itinerant. By the reign of Charles V and Philip II, gypsies without a recognized trade were sentenced to serve in the king's galleys. The seventeenth century saw a sharpening of attitudes and debate within the Cortes and court about possibly expelling the gypsies. Restrictive legislation went so far as to ban the use of the word *gitano*, the Spanish word for gypsy. Despite sporadic attempts by the crown to enforce its policies in particularly harsh ways, in the eyes

of their elite critics, the gypsy "problem" remained unsolved. Ultimately, Pym concludes, this was due to support that the gypsies received at the local level and poor mechanisms of enforcement.

Pym also considers the role of literature and the church in shaping attitudes toward and treatment of the gypsies. With few exceptions, the portrayal of the gypsies in literature was negative, presenting them as thieving and conniving and often engaged in particularly heinous crimes like stealing babies. The church, on the other hand, did not mimic the state in its repression. The Inquisition certainly heard cases against the gypsies; the accusations against them were typically for offenses like sorcery and blasphemy. Yet sentencing in most cases tended to be lenient. The church was even willing in some instances to provide sanctuary to gypsies.

A strength of the book is Pym's contextualization of elite policy and legislation directed against the gypsy population. For example, he rightly argues that the increasingly harsh legislation of the seventeenth century must be seen in the context of the crisis and decline that Spain experienced in this period. Spain was anxious to define its cultural integrity and purity. Thus, Pym posits, we cannot separate the debate about the gypsies from the debate about the *moriscos*, who were, in fact, expelled in 1609.

My only criticism of the book involves its occasionally disjointed organization. While, for the most part, the study moves chronologically, this structure is sometimes interrupted by brief forays into other analytical topics. The topics themselves are always relevant, but do not necessarily fit where they are placed. In the chapter exploring the increased sentencing of gypsies to service in the king's galleys in the sixteenth century, for example, Pym interjects a fascinating analysis of the question of gypsy dress (something that the Spanish state frequently tried to legislate against). Such a discussion is critical to the overall study, but it is a bit misplaced at that particular juncture. Yet since all of the evidence and interpretation presented is relevant to the topic under study, this is only a small objection to what is otherwise a solid treatment of the subject.

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ÁNGEL ALLOZA APARICIO. *Europa en el mercado español: Mercaderes, represalias y contrabando en el siglo XVII*. (Estudios de historia.) Valladolid, Spain: Junta de Castilla y León. 2006. Pp. 260.

In 1633, the marquis of Aytona declared to Philip IV of Spain: "the greatest blow that can be inflicted on France would be the destruction of its trade which would ensure the collapse of the French king." In fact, the efficacy of economic warfare, founded in part upon the growing interdependency of European trade and the importance of the Spanish market (and through Spain its Indies), had long been apparent, as Philip II had attempted to coerce Elizabeth I by means of an