

Bryn Mawr College
Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr
College

Growth and Structure of Cities Faculty Research
and Scholarship

Growth and Structure of Cities

1995

Review of *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*, by Henry Kamen

Gary W. McDonogh

Bryn Mawr College, gmcdonog@brynmawr.edu

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cities_pubs

 Part of the [Architecture Commons](#), [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Custom Citation

McDonogh, Gary W. Review of *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*, by Henry Kamen. *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1598-1599, doi: 10.2307/2169977.

This paper is posted at Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College. http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cities_pubs/3

For more information, please contact repository@brynmawr.edu.

HENRY KAMEN. *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993. Pp. xiv, 527. \$45.00.

The dialogues of history and anthropology continue to be enriched by works in which ethnography and broad sociocultural models can be tested against the reconstruction of distant pasts. In this encyclopedic text, Henry Kamen focuses his magisterial command of archival resources and Spanish historiography on religious development in early modern Catalonia. Yet, to an anthropologist, the implications of his text go beyond his historical gaze to raise interdisciplinary concerns about the nature of place and voice, about the connections and rhythms of cultural and social processes, and, ultimately, about the meanings of change itself.

Kamen begins with vignettes from Mediona, a rural hamlet of the Alt Penedès, near Barcelona. Through surviving sources on religious practice, Kamen evokes a judicious sense of a complicated village: bequests and expenditures, fights and celebrations, fears and deaths. Kamen avoids temptations for "social generalizations," yet he makes the varied personalities and features of the community tangible. Mediona, along with other Catalan localities, provides a concrete referent for later arguments, in comparison with more intense, albeit diverse reports from Barcelona.

Kamen then situates local questions within the problems of Philip II and Catalonia amid broad peninsular structures of reform, ongoing as well as Tridentine. He nonetheless carefully balances these changes with failures and everyday resistance. I would worry at times that student readers might be overwhelmed by the many examples introduced from Spain and the rest of Europe, although these underscore Catalonia as a society with its own diverse interpretations of the world.

In subsequent solid, lengthy chapters Kamen discusses interrelated phenomena that go beyond any single locus of time and space, recalling in their breadth and rhythms Clifford Geertz's image of culture as an octopus. Kamen's third chapter, for example, raises issues of public worship ranging from the imposition of liturgical reforms on dioceses (which seemed invariably to have just invested in new local missals) to the meshing of new forms and practices with older features of belief and action: saints, spaces, and celebrations. This tension of multiple hierarchies and complex social practices of continuity suggests a creative filter by which reforms were made local and impacts nuanced, however serious the changes of these decades on Catalan life. In the fourth chapter Kamen elaborates on these in tracing popular festivities and meanings that were whittled away at rather than abruptly abolished by reform. Again, one glimpses a continuity to Catalan actions and beliefs as meaningful as the new disciplines steadily encroaching on pilgrimage and carnival.

Kamen's acknowledged mastery of the Inquisition

comes out in his book's fifth chapter. Here his review of the concerns and actions of that body conveys to the reader its limited power and even rejection by many levels of Catalan society. Meanwhile, he effectively contrasts the actions of Catalans and their institutions to policies emergent in other parts of Spain.

A broader reading of society appears in the next chapter on marriage and sexuality, perhaps the only chapter where one feels that too many sociocultural features are covered in the pages allocated them. The author traces attempts to impose ecclesiastical rules on customary economics, including strategic manipulations of different perceptions of marriage. A discussion of love and conduct follows, in which confessors' manuals are read against these legal structures. Extended observations on infidelity then lead to reflections on sexuality as well as the status of women. Kamen again argues that changes must be perceived on a broad scale rather than as a simple acceptance of "reform." Yet so many interlocking points convolute the argument.

The final chapters deal with teaching and communication. Kamen analyzes the influence of reform and religious orders on sermons and catechism, epitomized by the Jesuits in Catalonia. This complements his earlier discussions of other orders without making institutional features into protagonists or merely accepting their reports of success. A discussion of bilingual teaching as part of Catalan differentiation within a changing Spain and a divided universal church forms a bridge to chapter 8, with its vivid evocations of printers, readers, and intermediaries in a Catalonia enmeshed in Europe but also interpreting that world, whether Counter Reformation piety or Spanish incursions. Thus, Kamen's book, which begins in a small rural town, ends with the cosmopolitan collection of a single Barcelona bookshop. Yet in such microcosms the author has explored culture in both its octopoidal attributes and its central, generative features that explain unity even within change, as the brief conclusion notes.

Ultimately, the most critical theme here for both anthropologists and historians is that of change itself. The very image of the "Counter Reformation," however nuanced by our historical research, risks evoking some tectonic force. From extensive readings and variegated voices, Kamen instead has presented a much more complex fabric of social movement. Catalans both anticipated and ignored pivotal documents; central reform issues were altered by their political context, economic implications, or a genial amplification that changed their content and impact. Obviously, Catalonia and Catalan Catholicism changed, but the cultures of the principality become evident in how change was tested, understood, and embodied in inhabitants of cities and countryside through these crucial centuries. This complexity is aggravatingly familiar to those working among contemporary social actors and their participation in global changes, a

heartening meeting ground for anthropology and history.

In his preface, Kamen notes that the "themes for exploration—and the sources—are virtually limitless." By giving order, insight, and context to these data, by envisioning the Counter Reformation as actually lived and altered in Barcelona as well as Mediona and Perpignan, he certainly has illuminated the means by which we must learn from the culture of the past in the present and future.

GARY W. McDONOGH
Bryn Mawr College

M. ANNE PITCHER. *Politics in the Portuguese Empire: The State, Industry, and Cotton, 1926–1974*. New York: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press. 1993. Pp. xvi, 322. \$62.00.

Two standard images of Portugal under the Antonio Salazar regime depict a system that was basically opposed to economic modernization and an empire generally characterized by an "uneconomic imperialism." This book by M. Anne Pitcher grapples with aspects of the problems invoked by both of these images as it studies the evolution of the textile industry in metropolitan Portugal, cotton production in Portuguese Africa, and the developments in state policy that regulated both sectors and sought in varying ways to integrate them. The investigation of economic policy and performance is preceded for each period of the regime with a brief description of general developments in Portuguese politics and state policies. The economic research is based on primary sources ranging from official publications and records to direct documentation, supplemented by a number of limited secondary studies, and the political synopses rely on standard secondary works.

Pitcher early on concludes that analysis of the *Estado Novo* based on its official corporative laws and doctrine tends to mask the way in which the economy actually functioned, and in this she is now supported by most other scholars who work in this period. The Salazar regime was highly statist and interventionist, but it never developed functional corporatism more than halfway, the theoretical role of the corporations more often being carried on by private entrepreneurs and groups on the one hand and the state on the other.

For a century textiles had been the first and principal modern Portuguese industry, or at least the nearest thing to a modern industry, but by the 1930s and 1940s the state's priority lay with more innovative and dynamic sectors. Thus, according to the author, the textile industry was regulated in a capricious manner that failed to expedite its modernization. It occasionally benefited from enforced cotton production in the colonies and the Portuguese system of imperial preference, most notably during World War II. In general, she finds that state policy sometimes favored the largest and most modern firms, although

not consistently. State regulations and autarchist policies also permitted many small obsolete firms to survive into the second half of the century, while handicapping the industry with higher costs and lower-quality cotton.

The autarchist system of enforced colonial cotton production was much more detrimental, of course, to the colonized, as Pitcher points out. The only beneficiaries in Angola and Mozambique were the large companies and, in the final years, colonial cotton farmers and a small minority of more enterprising native cultivators.

In general, Pitcher's findings are consistent with other recent investigations of Portuguese policy in this period, most notably those by Fernando Rosas. Her main conclusions about overall economic performance during the final decades of the regime lie about halfway between what she describes as the "stagnation" and "integrationist" schools of interpretation. This is broadly convincing, although it should be recognized that industrial growth throughout the 1950s and 1960s was generally quite positive and, given Portugal's basic problems, could probably have only been improved slightly by a more creatively liberal regime.

The discussion of broader political developments presents the conventional wisdom about Portuguese affairs. Only rarely is there a minor faux pas, such as the description of the military conspiracy aborted by Salazar in 1961 as an "attempted military coup" that was "crushed" (p. 213).

Although it offers no strikingly original new insights, this is a well-researched and clearly analyzed monograph that adds further to our detailed knowledge of state policy and economic development in Portugal and its empire under the dictatorship.

STANLEY G. PAYNE
*University of Wisconsin,
Madison*

ANGÉLIQUE JANSSENS. *Family and Social Change: The Household as a Process in an Industrializing Community*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1993. Pp. xxii, 317. \$64.95.

This book by Angélique Janssens challenges Talcott Parsons's theory that industrialization produced nuclear families, and that extended family structures inhibited successful adaptation to the industrial world. The author's introduction is particularly useful for its lucid summary of past scholarship and ongoing debate about the nature of family change. Janssens contributes to this debate with her analysis of two household samples whose histories she reconstructs (from 1849 to 1890 and from 1880 to 1920) in the Dutch city of Tilburg.

Although Janssens's use of longitudinal data is less innovative than she suggests—many historians have linked records to get beyond the limits of census reports—the source on which she relies is unusually