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**Sheilagh Ogilvie, The European Guilds. An Economic Analysis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019)**

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de ergste (nummer 810 van de 1000). Hoewel Noorlander het Nederlandse cliché niet aanhaalt, blijkt uit zijn boek duidelijk dat predikant en koopman allesbehalve tegenpolen waren, maar integendeel vaak gelijk opgingen. Lang niet altijd hand in hand – er waren zeker conflicten – maar kerk en compagnie waren innig met elkaar verbonden en deelden *au fond* dezelfde belangen.

Door de frisse en weidse blik, het net iets ander gezichtspunt en het scala aan gebruikte bronnen is *Heaven's Wrath* een belangrijke bijdrage aan het onderzoek naar de zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlands-Atlantische wereld, de rol van kerk en godsdienst binnen de Nederlandse koloniale expansie en de achterliggende drijfveren daarvan. Als zodanig is het dan ook onmisbare literatuur voor iedereen die zich bezig houdt met de geschiedenis van de zeventiende-eeuwse koloniale expansie. Een klein minpunt aan dit boek is wel de onbegrijpelijke afwezigheid van een literatuurlijst, zodat men de gebruikte literatuur moet nazoecken in de ruim vijftig bladzijden aan voetnoten. Hopelijk kan dit euvel worden verholpen in een volgende, of zelfs een eventuele Nederlandstalige editie – die dit boek zeker zou verdienen.

Henk Looijesteijn, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis

Sheilagh Ogilvie, *The European Guilds. An Economic Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019). 672 p. ISBN 9780691185101.

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Known as a prolific economic historian who intervenes with contrarian viewpoints in all major debates about Europe's premodern economy, Sheilagh Ogilvie has written yet another provocative study. After her excellent book about merchant guilds from 2011, she has now turned her attention to the craft guilds that defined Europe's economy between 1000 and 1800. This is not a new topic for her, as Ogilvie had already engaged in an exchange of ideas with the late Stephan Epstein in *The Economic History Review* of 2007/2008 about the contribution of craft guilds to Europe's economic performance in the premodern era. Her new study continues this discussion, with the aim of establishing whether historical sources support a positive or negative interpretation of their contribution. Unsurprisingly, Ogilvie's stance in the debate remains unaltered; she argues throughout the book that craft guilds were not a solution to the failures of markets and states but part of the problem.

The significance of this study is, firstly, that Ogilvie extends her empirical scope from the Württemberg Black Forest to cover the whole of Europe, as she

has compiled two databases (available online) with observations about guilds and their activities. The first consists of 12,051 qualitative observations; the second of 5,333 quantitative observations. These findings are reasonably spread out over late medieval and early modern Europe. Ogilvie acknowledges several shortcomings inherent in her ambitious and impressive effort, but argues that the sheer number of observations renders the data representative. The systematic and in-depth discussion of the rich empirical evidence is admirable, although it makes the book far from a page-turner. After an introductory chapter, she examines the behaviour of guilds from seven perspectives: public power, entry barriers, market manipulation, gender, quality regulation, human capital investment, and innovation. Each chapter has a similar structure: a series of theoretical statements about guilds are derived from a discussion of the historiography, and these hypotheses are then tested against the presented data, thereby taking differences between the medieval and early modern periods into account.

In the chapter on human capital investment, for example, Ogilvie postulates that guilds may have protected apprentices from the opportunistic behaviour of masters by regulating apprenticeships (p. 358). However, this assumption is refuted by 92 observations from the database, which indicate that at least 31 per cent of apprentices did not finish their training. Opportunism on either side, master or apprentice, was more often a cause of non-completion than was death; apprentices also resorted to municipal courts rather than to guilds in cases of conflicts. Hence, she concludes that it is doubtful 'that guilds provided institutional mechanisms that made training relationships work better' (p. 406). This supports her general conclusion that guilds did in no way contribute to human capital development or economic growth, as they privileged the few and excluded the many. Surprisingly, however, Ogilvie does not engage with Bert De Munck's work about the (economic) meaning of apprenticeship in the early modern Southern Low Countries.

The main argument is presented by Ogilvie in the ninth chapter, in which she explores the important question as to whether the strength of guilds had an impact on economic performance. She distinguishes between their relative strength in three landscapes: strong guilds existed in much of central, southern and northern Europe, they were weak in the Low Countries and England, and they had intermediate strength in various other areas, for example France, Italy, Switzerland, and parts of Germany. (This clustering raises some questions, especially the classification of the guilds in the medieval Southern Low Countries as weak.) Subsequently, Ogilvie compares the relative strength of guilds to the economic performance of these regions in terms of GDP per capita, which leads her to conclude that guilds 'were never associated with economic success' (p. 563). Here, she abandons her previous cautiousness about quality of data, and the ob-

served correlation between guild strength and economic performance is not rigorously accounted for. It is, for instance, difficult to see how one institution alone could produce very different economic outcomes.

In comparison to her empirical analysis, Ogilvie's theoretical reasoning is concise. The binary distinction she makes between good ('generalized') and bad ('particularized') institutions underlies the point that she consistently seeks to prove: whatever a guild was, it was bad. In the conclusion, Ogilvie explains institutional persistence and change; she regards institutions as the equilibria that result from conflicts over the distribution of resources. But if institutions are indeed a function of power, then strictly speaking the problem was the premodern distribution of power, rather than the guilds. Why could the political economy give rise to a rent-seeking coalition of political elites and guild members that took advantage of the rest of society? The persistence of this alliance is also debatable, because political elites tried to suppress guilds if they could, opting for even more 'efficient' ways of capturing a larger share of the economic pie. In late medieval Leiden, for example, the political elite, with the support of the drapers, implemented policies that curbed the freedom of artisans and set a repressive wage policy for labourers in the textile industry. Moreover, Ogilvie stresses that alternative institutions to guilds existed, but what impact did these have on the functioning of and accessibility to markets? And could the market itself have sustained economic growth in premodern Europe? Finally, although Ogilvie emphasises that the data compilation is a work in progress and depends on the availability of literature, it would have been helpful if she had explained in more detail how this literature is selected and how the highly aggregated data are coded. It is striking, for example, that only one medieval guild is included in the quantitative database for Leiden and two for Norwich, even though these well-documented towns counted tens of occupational associations.

Ogilvie's wide-ranging and scrutinous analysis of craft guilds is an essential and stimulating read for all scholars interested in guilds and institutions. She has set a high benchmark for scholars who believe that guilds as exclusionary interest groups could have had wider benefits, because that position can no longer be taken for granted. But the debate needs their responses in order to reach a more balanced understanding of the meaning of guilds for the premodern European economy and society.

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