

focus on metropolitan areas such as Houston, Texas, and made it more applicable to a broader southern historiography, but he does not make that claim. Rather, he evokes the Sunbelt as a monolith in which North Alabama's transformation is the model.

Criticisms aside, this is an important book on twentieth-century southern economic development. Its accessibility and strong grounding in primary and secondary sources make it an excellent addition to graduate historiographic lists. Its focus on the economic evolution of an understudied area promises to inspire similar scholarship in other localized clusters that benefited from federal programs.

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Céline Dauverd. *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Genoese Merchants and the Spanish Crown*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xii + 299 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-06236-8, \$110.00 (cloth).

This work analyses the relations between the Spanish monarchy and the Genoese mercantile class between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, during the apogee of both Spain and Genoa. These powers led an imperialist drive, which was of an economic nature in the Genoese case and political or “dynastic,” in the author's definition, in the Spanish one, which, under the common sign of Christianity, determined their joint actions against the Islamic Mediterranean. The relationship of Spain and Genoa is defined as symbiotic, that is, marked by a mutual interdependence, a nearly biological confluence of interest, in which the survival and prosperity of each depended to a large extent on the actions of the other one. Among the ties that united them, the financial one was of special importance, especially after Genoa began developing its financial activities after it lost access to the eastern markets with the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (in 1453). In time, the Genoese became the financial lifeline of the Spanish Crown. The new Genoese economic policy was based on the commercial prosperity offered by the southern Italian markets, controlled economically by the Genoese and politically by the Spanish; hence, the author's choice of this region, especially Naples, as her observatory for the relationship between Genoa and Spain. Genoa possessed important mercantile

interests in the area, and explicitly requested the support and protection of the Spanish Crown in exchange for financial support, without which the Spanish could not have dealt with all the fronts opened in the course of their imperial policy in Europe, and without which the profitability of the American enterprise was not guaranteed. This idea effectively conveys the notion of symbiosis stressed in the book.

The book is divided into eight chapters, and the author unfolds her argument through a well-articulated and easy-to-follow narrative thesis. It begins with a contextualization of the political situation in the western Mediterranean during the period under study. The second part addresses the economic context within which Genoa developed its mercantile activity in southern Italy, examining the financial growth that made it a leading economic and social power during the period of its alliance with the Spanish Crown, which, in turn, exercised its political domination over the region. The work ends with an analysis of the social projection of this position of leadership and of the role played by the Genoese in the local public religious manifestations.

Chapter 1 reconstructs the sequence of alliances and confrontations that led to the development of the “symbiotic” state of Genoese and Spanish in their drive toward supremacy. This is done by recalling Pistarino and Heers’s classic schema of the reorientation of Genoa toward the west. The process is, however, dated to a later date than usual, the late fifteenth century, with the death of the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II and the end of the privileges enjoyed by the Genoese in eastern markets. Genoa was to turn its commercial interests to the west, beginning its collaboration with the Spanish Crown and also its increasingly open struggle with France, which became progressively closer to the Turks who, in turn, began their corsair campaign in the West Mediterranean.

The diversification of Genoa’s commercial strategy in southern Italy, including cereal exports, a traditional activity for the Genoese, who had been practicing it since the twelfth century, and the production and commercialization of silk, was the secret behind its success. Diversification provided insurance against ruin and laid the foundations of a financial strength that eased the way of the Genoese into banking. This justifies the attention paid by the book to the organization of the silk trade, which is the topic of Chapter 3. In a brief synthesis based on the work of other authors, the chapter explains that the Genoese undertook three roles in this trade: as manufacturers, as haulers (taking the goods toward northern Italy and other regions), and as financiers. This chapter is of enormous interest but leaves open many issues.

The secret of the Genoese success rested on their ability to mobilize ample networks with their co-nationals and, especially, with merchants from other nations. Favorable alliances were established, with the Genoese collaborating with some nations and competing

with others, adapting to different conditions and needs. Dauverd is thus justified in consecrating Chapter 4 to the relationship between Genoa and other mercantile powers in the region, chiefly those of the Catalans and Florentines. The struggle to become the most-favored nation for the Spanish Crown, and thus to be awarded important fiscal, political, and social advantages, is divided into three stages: a first stage of open collaboration with the Catalans; a second of open competition with the Florentines, after the star of the Catalans waned for reasons that are merely hinted at; and a last stage that marks the ultimate economic success of Genoa, chiefly caused by the political relationship between Spain and the Ottoman Empire.

Despite the common interest in Empire, be it political or merely economic, Spanish and Genoese strategies were not always necessarily compatible, an issue that is dealt with in Chapter 5. According to Dauverd, the operation of the Empire relied on viceroys and Genoese merchants. While viceroys sought good governance systems and the implementation of economic policies oriented toward public welfare, the Genoese worked for their own profit, which ultimately made them a financial source for the maintenance of the Empire. Much attention is thus paid to the relationship, and the struggle for dominance, between viceroys and merchants in the kingdom of Naples. Dauverd, in fact, lays some responsibility for the revolts that took place in Naples from 1648 onward on the pressure exercised by the Genoese on the viceroys, who were made to strangle the locals with taxes for the ultimate profit of the merchants.

In the second part of the book, the direct handling of sources is shown more clearly, and Dauverd explores the social attitudes associated with Genoese supremacy in southern Italy and the closeness of their cooperation with the Empire.

Chapter 6 describes and analyzes the organization of the processions and other religious ceremonies related to the main celebration in the Catholic calendar, Easter, which was an indicator of the political, social, and economic order in the city, and transparently reflected the importance of the Genoese in Neapolitan society. The presence, along with civic brotherhoods, of associations of Genoese and Florentine merchants, each of which had their own personal style, and, of course, of the Spanish, was a visual representation of the position of these groups and of their role as protectors and providers.

“Utility, representation and spiritual expression” (p. 197) are the three principles behind the construction of churches, cemeteries, and charitable foundations related to the Genoese community in Naples, as explicated in Chapters 7 and 8. Due to their competitive streak, which made them confront prestigious spiritual forces such as the Order of Malta, the Genoese were always on the lookout for new ways to improve their social position and gain explicit recognition of their

role in the defense of the faith and the status quo. With this, they sought to present themselves as dependable allies of the Crown at all levels. They created, funded, and managed the main poor houses in Naples; they instituted charitable pawnbrokers (mounts of piety), a novel form of charity that combined medical services with the concession of microcredits to the poor. The reality of this charitable activity is that it was perceived as a new way to show how closely involved the Genoese were with matters of the Crown, such as helping the poor, thus maintaining their status as the Crown's favorite nation. In addition, these activities were instrumental in maintaining important posts in the hands of the Genoese community.

Overall, the book's thesis is interesting and well developed, although some important issues are only superficially addressed. The book mostly relies on the work of other scholars, especially concerning the economic strategies of the Genoese. The treatment of sources and historiography is rather uneven, and Spanish authors, or works which analyze the historical issue at hand from the Spanish perspective, are almost entirely absent, which does not help to understand the symbiotic character of the relationship of the Genoese and the Spanish Crown; many issues are, therefore, left unresolved. This, at any rate, does not detract too much from the value of the work, which opens extraordinarily interesting lines of future enquiry. I want to finish with a personal impression, which may very well be mistaken: Dauverd opens the book by clearly stating her intention to revise the notion of a backward south dominated by the more advanced economies, that is, the traditional colonialist ideas, but this commendable intention finds little projection in the book. This is, I believe, the main field of contention in what is, overall, a truly interesting proposal.

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Philip A. Howard. *Black Labor, White Sugar: Caribbean Braceros and Their Struggle for Power in the Cuban Sugar Industry*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015. xii + 303 pp. ISBN 978-0-8071-5952-1, \$47.50 (cloth).

Black Labor, White Sugar is a meticulously researched, persuasively argued, and exceptionally well-presented examination of the extremely