

findings make Württemberg available for meaningful comparison, and through assured handling of the commonalities and individuality of so many towns she leads by example in the field of comparative urban history.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.55

*Wirtschaftserfolg zwischen Zufall und Innovativität: Oberdeutsche Städte und ihre Exportwirtschaft im Vergleich (1350–1550)*. Beat Fumasoli.

Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte—Beihefte 241. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017. 580 pp. €82.

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This book is a revised version of a PhD thesis that the faculty of philosophy and history at the University of Bern accepted in 2015. The author examines which factors contributed to the success of those towns in late medieval upper Germany where export production played a large role. Fumasoli begins by discussing potential causes of success and explains how he selected the towns and cities he investigates. Chapter 2 examines those branches of manufacturing that produced for export, while chapter 3 looks at how the success of these branches was influenced by the factors introduced before. Fumasoli considers the absence of disasters, factor endowment, the structure and techniques of trade, technologies, and urban economic policies. He finds that the cooperation between producers and merchants who organized export was particularly important.

Economic historians typically consider a piece of research original if it provides new historical insights in at least one of three ways: by utilizing hitherto unexploited primary sources; by placing known evidence in a new social-theoretical framework, thereby generating testable hypotheses; or by applying new methods in the analysis of the evidence. How does Fumasoli stand up to these criteria? He does not draw on any explicit theoretical approach—in fact, he openly rejects economic theory (47). This limits the scope of his arguments in a large number of places. To give just one example, he repeatedly uses the term “path dependency” in order to explain the persistence of inferior technologies (238, 499). However, why path dependencies existed remains vague. Had Fumasoli been aware of the economic literature, where they are analyzed as the outcome of specific investments and network effects, he would have been able to approach his evidence with the question in mind of whether such investments and effects prevented the adoption of superior technologies in late medieval upper Germany. In that case, we might actually have learnt something about causalities. As it is, we don't.

Neither does Fumasoli use a new method to analyze familiar evidence. In recent years, the new methodology that has been applied most fruitfully in economic history has been based on econometrics; in principle, this approach is applicable in the author's context, too. In fact, he does collect and present quantitative data on, for example, the

average wealth of taxpayers in the towns he is examining (154), which he could have subjected to a formal analysis. However, his rejection of economics closes the door to this methodology from the outset, thereby severely restricting the insights he is able to gain.

Finally, and most strikingly, considering that the book originated as a PhD thesis in history, Fumasoli does not use any hitherto unknown historical evidence either. The work is based exclusively on published primary and secondary sources—an approach that gives it the character of an extended literature survey. Is it a good survey? The author certainly has an admirable grasp of local history research published in German and does a good job pulling this together in a clearly structured, comparative way. However, his knowledge of anything beyond this, particularly of authors whose publications would have allowed him to place his work in a wider context, is patchy. Again, this limits the scope of his arguments. For example, he discusses inventiveness without reference to Mokyr and apparently without being aware of how the public-good character of new technologies influences the incentives potential inventors face (372). He talks about the importance of human capital (191) without taking note of what, for example, Baten, van Zanden, and Buringh have done in this field. His discussion of Malthusian income effects (159) refers to Lütge and Abel, who wrote in the 1930s to 1970s, but not to Allen, Pfister, or Clark. The list goes on. In short, Fumasoli's book convinces neither as a piece of research in economic history that applies the methods and theories of a social science to previously known evidence, nor as an analysis of so far unexploited archival sources, nor as a survey that critically discusses the literature. It leaves the reader deeply dissatisfied.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.56

*Vom Leib geschrieben: Der Mikrokosmos Zürich und seine Selbstzeugnisse im 17. Jahrhundert.* Sundar Henny.

Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit 25. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2016. 404 pp. €72.

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The proliferation of so-called ego-documents that characterized Renaissance Europe has given rise to a specialized field of research, to which this book contributes. Sundar Henny's interdisciplinary dissertation concentrates on five bodies of such documents from Zurich in the seventeenth century. Drawing on literature, cultural studies, and the history of knowledge, Henny analyzes the very different ways four men from Zurich's elite and one from its margins represented themselves in manuscripts and in print. Henny's elegantly self-referential introduction identifies one thread in his approach to the five authors involved—namely, the material heterogeneity of the testimonies he found through a Swiss catalogue of ego-documents. Questions about material form—