

AN INTRODUCTION TO GREEK ECONOMIC HISTORY,  
FIFTEENTH TO NINETEENTH CENTURIES:  
FIELDS OF OBSERVATION AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *One of the constitutive objectives of The Historical Review has been to bring to the attention of international scholarship historical research in the broad field of the human sciences produced in the Greek language not only by members of the Institute for Neohellenic Research but by the larger research community in Greece. There could hardly be a more appropriate case in this direction than the work of a distinguished historian, who has played a leading role in the renewal of historical scholarship in Greece in the last quarter century and who has been a senior member of our Institute since 1986. Spyros Asdrachas has been a protagonist in chartering the entire field of economic history in Greece and has trained a whole generation of economic historians who are continuing along the trajectories he has opened up with his pioneering researches. What distinguishes his work in economic history is the broader historical culture he brings to bear upon the subject, which often suffers from a dryness of approach and a technocratic outlook, devoid of historical sensitivity. Asdrachas combines precisely that broad historical culture which is always the mark of a great historian with a professional dedication to a constant conversation with source material and to continuous reflection on questions of method. All these features of his intellectual profile mark his magnum opus, Greek Economic History, 15th-19th Centuries, of which it is a pleasure for The Historical Review to present here the opening chapter. In it the author outlines the substance of his approach, dwells on critical methodological issues and maps the territory of a vast field of research by pointing to the main substantive issues that have formed the focus of attention of the entire work. Even this concise introductory outline makes plain the complexity of the subject and the sophistication of the approach employed in attempting to bring intellectual discipline and coherence in its treatment. As such this text and the work it inaugurates represent a major milestone in contemporary Greek historiography. It is a work which is an inexhaustible mine of information and historical detail and at the same time a testimony of historical reflection and critical judgement. The work first appeared in Greek in 2003, published by the Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation, and an English translation, to be issued by the same publisher, is under way.*

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Under scrutiny in this History are the Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire and in the Venetian possessions, not however in their totality, as certain spheres where we would come across them are beyond the scope of our observation or only partially within it: Asia Minor and Cyprus, for instance, elude it, together with their rural populations, although we will meet some of their people when examining certain of their activities, namely commercial.

These are conquered peoples and their history is therefore that of the subjected: it is not their entire history, but their economic history and moreover does not signify that it is the history of their economy nor even a chronicle of the events of such a history. It intends to show the mechanisms regulating the economy in which these conquered peoples participated as factors of production, either because it was the fruit of their labour or because it became theirs once they constituted the factors of the market. The economy of the subjected is naturally not distinct from that of their overlords, or, more specifically, of the conquering society, since the overwhelming majority of the latter had the same occupations as those under their rule, but as the subjected are demographically in superior numbers in the regions under scrutiny, they are for this reason the direct factors of an economy which in any case, regarding its sectors and mechanisms, is identical for all, the conquered and the conquerors. The ways in which the economy is appropriated is, however, not equally distributed between the one and the other: the conquering society, through its power of authority ensures a surplus from both the subjected and their conquerors, by means of which it maintains its own supremacy, that is to say the system of conquest.

The people we have named as Greeks (*Hellenes* in the Greek language) would not describe themselves as such – they are generally known as *Romioi* and *Graikoi* – but according to their context the meaning of these words broadens to include or exclude population groups of another language and, at the same time, ethnicity. On the part of the Ottoman conquerors, already from the early years of the conquest, the word *Rum* meant at the same time their subjects of the Christian Orthodox faith and also those speaking Greek, as distinct from the neighbouring Albanians or Vlachs. The word *Yunan* refers solely to ancient Greeks until well into the nineteenth century. From that time it refers to nationals of the Hellenic State as well as to Greeks of the diaspora. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, a Turkish scholar attributes the same name to both the European and Asian parts of the Empire.

Prior to the conquest, the word *Rum* had territorial connotations for the Seljuks, referring to the territory of the Byzantine Empire in which they settled as suzerains, so that from the eleventh century they refer to themselves as *Rum*. *Graikos*, on the other hand, in Western sources, does not refer exclusively to a Greek language speaker but to an adherent to the Eastern Church, and as for *Hellenes* and *Hellenic*, to the collective conscience and in the official culture, throughout the ages we are here concerned with, it was never rid of the attribute of idolater despite the positive attitude of scholars in regard to ancient Greece. In other words, the use in the original of this volume of the word “Greek”, as proper noun and adjective is conventional in the same way as it

would be a convention to employ a term more contemporaneous of the period in question such as *Romios* or *Graikos*.

Additionally, the subjected peoples we shall be dealing with were not all Greek-speakers or speakers also of Greek; furthermore, Greek speech retained its ecumenism of foregoing ages, and at the same time, particularly in the eighteenth century, it was assumed into a civilising process which, albeit eventually becoming a national-ethnic issue, was not necessarily so at the outset, nor even by the end of the eighteenth century, however inherent the germination of such “ethnicisation”. Speaking Greek naturally is not relative to connotations of the economy capable of distinguishing the human factors thereof; it is nevertheless Greek-speakers who not only participate in this economy but also give it its cultural stamp, either because their language conserves something of its ecumenical character or because it is transmuted into a vehicle for the civilising process.

The conquered and the conquering societies have been mentioned. Emphasis will be given to the former in order to clarify those characteristics that qualify them as the subject-matter of an economic history; such characteristics are their economic substance inasmuch as the political conditions of existence of a people determine their physiognomy as an economy. These conditions are specifically political and not generally social, for the latter are common to the overwhelming human majority of the conquering society; in the case of the conquered, however, the political conditions of their existence become social conditions for the simple reason that both societies, conquering and conquered, did not reach the point of identification by the dictates alone of their place in the production process. The society of the conquerors was not in its totality composed of dominators in the economy. The Muslim direct agricultural producer was equated, in terms of the economy, to his subjected counterpart, despite the degree to which fiscal policy favoured the former. The same applies to the artisan who, however, had espoused a code of ethics and consequently a professional conscience deriving from his religion, in which a subject adhering to another faith could not entirely take part. Both the direct agricultural producer belonging to the subjecting society and the artisan of the same faith in urban centres, despite whatever channels of communication and partial osmoses, belonged to two distinct social worlds that could not be identified in a common economic fate. The same applies also to those at the apex of the pyramid of each society: their integration in the system was conditional upon the maintenance of their social status, which was inseparable from their particularity as subjects belonging to a world of a different belief from that of the overlords. It was due to this cultural and religious dissimilarity that, mainly

in the eighteenth century, a certain number, those in particular known as the Phanariots, were enabled to play a dominating political and social role. To sum up, the regime governing the subjected did not imply a total absence, not only from control of the economy but also from control of political power and, in the end, of the ruling social formations. The economic physiognomy of the conquered will now come under detailed scrutiny.

#### 1. The economic physiognomy of the subjected

##### *The system of exercise of power*

Implicit in the system of the Ottoman conquest is the dichotomy of the societies inhabiting the conquered territories, the dichotomy being expressed primarily in their faiths: the conquering society is Muslim and on the whole distinct and dominating. It is not, however, totally one of exploitation; in other words it does not participate as a whole in appropriating a portion of the production or of the resources produced in general. This role is filled by a portion only of the conquering society, that which exercises power or serves it in its Muslim identity. At issue is mainly the part that controls the military mechanism, at whose head is the ruling dynasty, and also those parts that constitute the religious and judicial mechanisms. The latter also carries out administrative functions, precisely similar to that of the military mechanism. The fundament of the economy is secured by the state for all of these formations holding the reins of power; as, however, regards the religious formation, it is also ensured by the will of individuals who in turn also owe their economic base to the policy of distribution of the central power, namely the sultans.

The base of the state's economy, enabling the consequential exercise of a policy of distribution, is founded on the fact that it appropriates to itself a portion of production, and in general of resources produced, by taxation as well as by means of its proprietorship of certain sources of fiscal revenue, above all in cultivated or arable lands or plantations. This proprietorship is the outcome of conquest and at the same time of the scope of the powers or of the code of laws governing hereditary succession. The appropriation, nevertheless, of a portion of production which, on a high level of generalisation, may be considered as a portion of the surplus, or also the existence of state or public lands and other resources does not exclusively constitute the derivatives of conquest; in the present instance though, they are but the results thereof. The state, therefore, the product of conquest, is in a position to redistribute the economic values it has appropriated, whether natural or monetary, and in this

manner to constitute categories of income that owe their existence not to the process of production but to its results. In other words, the exercise of power is a pre-condition of the economy.

*The subjected and appropriation of public revenues*

The conquered population may benefit from the redistribution of the increments devolving to the state, but this is to a minimal degree in comparison to the representatives of the conquering society, for the patent reason that the subjects, without being assimilated in the faith, do not have access to all cogs of the mechanism of power, by means of which the appropriation is effected of a portion of production and of the total resources. There are, of course, sectors where identity of a subject does not signify exclusion from the process of appropriation: these were primarily in the field of commerce, also business ventures spawned by volition of the state, such as for example the tenancy of public revenues. Yet here too are mainly benefited those belonging to the conquering society and exercising the roles of power. In the passage of time and with the generalisation of the system of tenancy of public revenues, the subjects can act as intermediaries between the principal tenant and the targets of taxation: as a rule they are the Christian, subjected population. They can also undertake the responsibility for collection of revenue due directly to the state, without the intervention of a tenant as an individual, just as they can, in a collective formation, take the place of the tenant. All this, nevertheless, is not capable of eliminating the economic conditions of conquest and, mainly, of overturning its system of appropriations.

Of course, their intervention in the mechanism of appropriation of the general surplus permits certain of their representatives to benefit on the individual level, concurrently shaping a collective, financial and social physiognomy, which is at the same time the expression of the mechanism of partial incorporation into the system of exercise of power and perpetuation of its economic preconditions: in this mechanism belong the economic roles of the communities and their representative authorities, who may benefit on an individual and, by extension, family level, from the responsibilities of tax collection assigned to them. The same is valid for commerce and its consequential financial practices, especially from the late eighteenth century onward. Here too the intermediaries between the producer and various grades of the market elements benefit from the terms of exchange determined by the conquest.

*Fiscal obligation*

The discrimination in the economic regime governing the subjected society is generally situated in the fiscal behaviour toward it of the suzerain: the subjected are indeed burdened with liabilities not valid for the Muslim populations of the Empire, principally the imposition of the poll tax, the amount of which, albeit not over-onerous, is not for all that, negligible; further taxes, moreover, affecting the entire populace, irrespective of whether they belong to the society of the conquered or the conquerors, are more lenient to members of the conquering society, and the same goes for certain similar but not identical taxes burdening the agricultural population. Additionally, the discrimination of fiscal categories within the agricultural population has more gradations for the Muslims than for the Christians, as for example occurs in the case of distribution of Muslim cultivators according to their productive capacity, which is not valid in the case of the corresponding tax imposed on Christian taxpayers. The same is also noticeable in the case of customs duties, always more favourable for Muslims.

Were one to be restricted to the purely monetary correlation of the liabilities in tax for the subjected and for the members of the sovereign society, the variations arising as to the common or equivalent taxes would not constitute proof of a diametrically opposite fiscal policy of the overlord in regard to the totality of his subjects. The antithesis may be proved by the evidence of the social conditions of allocation and collection of taxes, a reality expressed by the constant complaints of the taxable population for excesses in or transgression of the rules which the state itself had instituted. In fact, inasmuch as tax is claimed from areas or habitation units with a compact or numerically superior Christian population, it is to be expected that fiscal liability should be taken as conditional to conquest and that it should moreover be negatively stressed by the exemption of certain Christians from a series of taxes or forced labour, for example the exemptions benefiting the so-called *müsselem* in return for services rendered to the state. In a word, the social conditions of conquest infiltrate the economic definition of the subjected and dictate the multiplicity of the economic policy of the regime.

*The spoils*

Insofar as a condition of the exercise of power, notably under military and administrative supremacy, is the control of land – frequently its early conversion into personal possession – it is evident that the beneficiaries of this procedure were the representatives of the military establishment, the Askeri, as

were the personnel of the Sublime Porte. The same was also valid for the tenants of public revenues, although from an early date, among these were included a number of individuals originating from the subjected society, principally, as has been noted, as sub-tenants, with greater incidence during the eighteenth and outset of the nineteenth centuries. Appropriation of wealth in the form of spoliation was also one of the functions of the Ottoman state and the means for such appropriation was warfare and forcible conquest: such wealth did not consist only of the natural or monetary product of fiscal claims but equally deriving from any sort of goods, the possession of which in the event ensured access to financial resources to be put to a variety of possible use. This wealth was extracted from the conquered societies and then redistributed, naturally unevenly, primarily among the members of the military personnel representing the mechanism of the society of the conquerors. For the part of the conquered, this requisition by force took on a specialised form of unlawful acts, pillaging on land and piracy at sea, in which also members of the conquering society participated. Legal spoils came under the competence of the establishment exercising the authority and the conquered could take part only inasmuch as they offered their services to a foreign power which granted them licence to practise legal piracy (corsairs), or the corresponding pillaging activities of their armed forces who were conducting warfare within the confines of the Ottoman dominions. There were of course compact Christian communities engaged in warring roles, and in this capacity they forced their protection upon the populace, in return for rewards paid for by the populations under “protection”. In Albania and Epirus these roles were filled by both Muslims and Christians; it was however the former who had the greater opportunity of integrating those roles into the system of conquest through the mechanism of military and administrative promotion reserved for the regional Muslim authorities.

#### *Regional authorities and collective bodies*

If conquest overturned the system of local authorities who combined responsibilities of a military and administrative, and corresponding economic nature, it did not entirely eliminate it; thus regional Christian officials retained their roles, as for instance former *pronoiaroi* (land holders granted under Byzantine privilege an estate called *pronoia*) incorporated into the feudal system, or other persons whom we find from the early days integrated into this system, without being in a position to know what functions they or their forefathers executed before the conquest. In some instances, in addition to their revenue originating from taxes, these members of the conquered society had

further privileges due to ownership of landed or other kind of property. In some cases these individuals were of the ruling class, of local or Western origin, and their integration into the Ottoman conquest did not necessarily presuppose their conversion to the faith of the suzerain, as occurred, among numerous others, in the case of the descendants of the House of the Tocchi. The conquest also did not involve abolishment of the landed property of monasteries or churches, although churches and monasteries – notably the Patriarchate of Constantinople itself, in fact – were incorporated as sources of revenue in the Ottoman fiscal mechanism. The members of the Christian religious machinery continued to receive dues from their congregation in connection with their execution of the ecclesiastical ritual. These rights, considered in the concept of the Ottoman system of public finance as sources of public revenue, were consequently liable to taxation; insofar as from the outset public funds were leased according to their kind, or regional categories (*mukata`a*), church revenue was ascribed to the latter, without however this affecting the tax liabilities of the congregation, which continued to pay dues to major or minor ecclesiastical authorities. These authorities had their own hierarchy, with its inherent vertical financial obligations, as for example priests to their metropolitan bishops, bishops to the patriarch. In this manner, the subjected society disposed of an institutional framework within which, by the power of custom, the financial obligations of its members toward those in authority were perpetuated, in parallel with those due to the political powers. At the community level these obligations became more fundamental, since the community was the intermediary between the taxable subjects and those in the seat of political power, collecting a series of taxes which, albeit imposed by the state in their total, they themselves distributed. For some this may possibly have come about from a very early date, as in the case where the payee of a tax was not “seized”, whether because he had left (as the tax on fallow fields: the *çift-i bozan*) or because the tax had been allocated in excess of tax-payable capacity.

#### *Charitable works and the infrastructure*

Economic behaviour is not devoid of ethical and spiritual connotations, juxtaposed to those or together with those that consolidated social prestige, to rather extreme peaks of ostentation. The broader field of expression of economic behaviour patterns of an ethical and spiritual tone was that of works conceived for the public good, not that this deprived them of other profitable strategies. For the part of the dominating society, works of a public character were carried out by the dedication of possessions or rights to charitable



institutions known as *vakoufia* (from the Turkish *vakif* = votive offerings). Such dedication entailed the alteration of the legal status of certain of the assets thus dedicated and furthermore the perpetuation of the rights upon them to the donor's descendants. The same practice applied also to the members of the subjected society, who were equally able to dedicate a portion of their possessions to charitable institutions, as a rule to monasteries, or they could proceed to set up projects for the public benefit and, later, the sponsorship of schools and, more rarely, hospitals. They could also establish or re-establish monasteries, in other words combine the conduct of their economic behaviour with financial needs of an indirect nature, although dictated by a different form of necessity, such as fear or hope: fear, on the one hand, of punishment in the after-life and hope, on the other, of the purchase of salvation and absolution of sins after death. Naturally, the charitable works of both societies concluded in the reinforcement of religious communities, who were able to execute autonomous economic roles with the main end-objective of maintaining and perpetuating the communities themselves. It is however worth noting that the situations of dichotomy brought about by conquest did not bring about equivalents in the ideological concept of the economy, beyond such as resulted from the unequal distribution of wealth to the two communities. There was a common code of ethics in the sphere of the economy, and in common also was the generalised denunciation of its transgression; the causes leading to such transgression were also in common.

Works of infrastructure or also those of a public aspect are the achievements of the conquering society, whether they are due to the public or the private sector. Their equivalents directly promoted by the subjected society are fewer and of lesser scope. Some of the former, such as the road network, stations, markets, serve both societies to the extent in which they participate in commercial traffic and a stable market. The conduct of economic functions consequently has a unifying effect and cancels the inequalities concomitant to conquest. Nonetheless, other projects, connected to worship and education, are carried out with a view to the society of the conquerors from whom the financial prerequisites derive and to whom their anticipated results are directed; in these areas the two societies are impermeable, with minimal margins for certain cultural osmoses with no repercussions on their financial roles. The response of the conquered society as to these fields of impermeability underlined the differences of the two societies, since the non-Muslim subjects could expect nothing from the concern for them of the agencies of the conquering power in regard to their purely unilateral needs. In this case, the needs in question concerned conditions for worship and education, and it was

unavoidable that their financing by the collective bodies or the individual representatives of the subjected should clothe the economic functions with ethical connotations, directly referring to the political and sociological conditions of conquest, while at the same time stressing the peculiarities of the economic regime itself of the subjected society.

### *Dissimilarities and integrations*

The cultural and social dissimilarities were not on a single track directed solely toward the wish for abolition of the ruling system itself, but equally directed to the desire for integration therein, by active means: these means were realisable thanks to the emergence to the fore of novel or reinforced economic and dominating forces which sought, and achieved, the redistribution of roles of dominance, without however this redistribution deregulating the conquest itself. The strongest representatives of these forces derived from the society itself of the conquerors, whose members had greater opportunities for vertical mobility, although a condition for their existence and promotion was the preservation of the system as a whole. Already from the early days of the sixteenth century, prosperous individuals infiltrate the system for reaping the fruits of public revenues who do not belong to the military order, triggering the reaction of the latter, who become champions of the older order of things and include even the reformist *ayan* of the beginning of the nineteenth century. The subjected peoples also discover institutional means of integration into the system, as is the case for the stratum composed of the Phanariots, a prerequisite for which is vertical social mobility, meaning in this instance financial and intellectual elevation. The possibilities, nevertheless, for transforming a horizontal to a vertical social mobility came up against ceilings that were infrangible for the non-Muslim populace, with the exception of such promotions as could take place in the interior of hierarchical collectivities such as the clergy, with the career progression they ensured for their members. Secular collectivities, particularly the communal, also enabled careers to evolve, similarly colliding with ceilings since transposition from communal to state predominance was out of the question insofar as the former was exercised by Christian populations. The same was also valid in the fields where economic advancement resulted from commerce, transport, or increased agrarian revenue; here, too, the exercise of social and political power-roles was conceivable only to the extent in which such roles were feasible internally to the collective bodies of the subjected society.

The economic regime governing the subjects could be – and was in fact – encumbered by the transgression of an fictional equilibrium, a transgression

also valid for the Muslim populations themselves, notably the peasant section thereof and primarily the rural populations, whose agents individuated not so much the ruling system but the manner of its application, whether by the state officials themselves or by the representatives of the tenants of public or crown revenues. Denunciation of transgression, whether on the part of the subjecting or the subjected society – a denunciation constantly reiterated throughout the centuries – translates the power of the integration mechanisms, in the final analysis, the interiorisation of the conditions and the fact of conquest and the common acceptance of the economic regime of the conquered by the very subjects of the conquest. In other words, the dynamics of self-abolition were not intrinsic to their economic regime unless inasmuch as its component subjects were treated differently, socially and politically, from their counterparts of the conquering society who, despite the privileged economic and fiscal terms applied to them, in the end belonged to the same production process. Nonetheless, the economic regime may be isolated from its social and political context only for methodological reasons, and it was in reality this last which defined it, not the abstract generality of the mechanism of appropriation of surplus to which they were subjected. Thus, the political and social terms of conquest from the outset determined the economic regime governing the subjected, as also their unequal participation in the social classifications, notably of the economy.

If, roughly speaking, the conquering society was placed among a tripartite system of those who made war (and were administrators), those who prayed, and those who produced, the conquered society participated partially and subordinately in the first function, existed in parallel with the second, and, in the regions we are concerned with, constituted the greater majority of the third. The economic conditions both societies shared in common, in their placement in one or the other of the three functions, unequally distributed and subject to insuperable thresholds, were not capable of bringing about a homogenisation subsuming under the economy, that is to say the position of every economic factor subjected to the production process, the social and political unequally weighted distinctions imposed by the conquest. From this angle it is possible to speak of the economy of the subjected and refer to its history, or otherwise, to speak of an economic history of the conquered without rendering it as having uniformity with the equivalent economy of the conquerors and, finally, to comprehend it as a component and at the same time detachable element of the former. In addition, the economy of the conquered, precisely because it was unequally weighted by the social conditions of conquest, despite its inherent integration potential, becomes a field of more intensive expression of all the destabilising forces of the uniform economic formation.

*The multiformity of the conquered*

The conquered do not of course constitute a uniform society except to the extent that they are distinct from the conquerors. In reality the conquered are articulated into many diverse racial, religious and cultural collectivities, each with its internal differentiations and geographic location. On the minor and the major scale they can exercise standard economic functions typical of each. These are however to be found, of a different density and intensity, in other collective bodies: the Vlach peoples are stock-breeders occupied with its parallel handicraft activities such as weaving, without this being in their monopoly; islanders turn to maritime occupations but not all islands are principally characterized by such, notably the larger; Gypsies have their professional specialisations, primarily metal smithery but again not exclusively; many villages specialise in handicrafts or in agriculture and land reclamation without it constituting the exclusive base of their economy although it bears their stamp. At the financial and mercantile level, from an early date two ethnicities are distinguished in the cultural and religious spheres: Jews and Armenians, but not all Jews and Armenians are merchants or financiers, nor are all the first artisans. In short, racial and cultural diversities in economic activities cannot define one another in absolute terms: in one or the other there occurs a high degree of coincidence. From this viewpoint the identification, throughout the ages, of certain ethnicities with specific economic activities, Greeks and Jews with commerce, Vlachs with animal husbandry or, parallel to identification, the exclusion of others – as is the stereotype of the Turks, who refrain from trade and transport – can extrapolate to a general rule only a section of economic activities and of the radius of their geographic dissemination. In the multifaceted web of economy consequently, all ethnic formations take part on an unequal footing, with permeable distributions and specialisations and concomitantly conflicting relations, as well as, conversely, ethnic solidarity or, on a lesser scale, regional solidarity.

*The economic connotations of Venetian rule*

In the Venetian possessions the distinction between the dominated and the dominating is filtered through the institutionalised power-roles undertaken by the latter for the former, implicated in the management of public finance and furthermore in the perpetuation and consolidation of feudal rights. The conquest by Westerners is connected to the settling of colonists from Venice, to a greater strength in Crete and lesser in the Ionian Islands, settlements with the objective of controlling the interior of the possessions by means of subjection

of the agrarian population to a complex web of feudal obligations, of a financial nature for the great majority of the peasant masses, either directly through the appropriation of a portion of the produce or indirectly in the form of forced labour or military service. These obligations concerned the agrarian population, in whose legal status was inherent the provision of forced labour, generally transmuted to a payment and also redeemable. Forced labour profited both the state and the overlords of the fiefs. Urban populations were exempt from certain of them such as galley-slavery, but not from all.

The Western colonists are established as proprietors of large or small fiefs and obliged to provide military services; in Crete they are established by Venice from the outset, although in other possessions they were already established from the days of previous Western rulers – in Corfu for instance by the Angevins. Locals infiltrate the alien formations everywhere, at times as feudal lords or as tenants of the feudal revenues. In Crete, feudal status is identified with the local nobility, which at the same time confers the prerequisites for admission to local councils, by means of which the control of public revenues is achieved. In the Ionian Islands, feudal status is not a prerequisite for participation in local councils, which are open to a portion of the urban inhabitants, the “citizens” or *cittadini*, who also qualify as the local aristocracy. These legally consolidated bodies give to those that constitute them a position in the management of public funds, and to others the prospect of participation therein to the extent of their financial assets, however without also disposing of institutionally designated rights; to be that is to say *cittadini* eligible for public office. Concomitant to inclusion in urban councils, albeit not as the sole condition, was the existence, as a rule, of agrarian property, or the capacity for exercising a profession for which a prerequisite was an education in letters or science: in effect, the practice of law or medicine. The existence of affluence did not suffice of itself for participation in the financial benefits deriving from the latter. Whoever, nevertheless, did not have the social prerequisites for inclusion in the councils but did possess the financial resources, sought and achieved their inclusion, without this casting doubt on the character and selectivity of these regional formations of power, incontrovertibly shaped by the conqueror, in agreement always with the conquered.

Mainly in the Ionian Islands, but to a significant degree in Crete also with the inclusion of certain locals in the category of nobles, internal social hierarchies were not based on the fact of conquest and the discrimination between alien masters and local subjects. They were based on the functions fulfilled by certain social layers, amongst which were the administrators’. For these layers, the conquest itself constituted a form of contract between local

groups of leaders and the Venetian Republic and the participants became “loyal citizens” in a position of relation of feudal solidarity with the ruler. The logic of this form of conquest was not identical to the Ottoman equivalent which granted to such as willingly, that is to say without resistance, accepted the supremacy of the sultan, certain exemptions from some obligations imposed upon the conquered populations. Venetian rule guaranteed the existence and perpetuation of formations of authority in the interior of their possessions, establishing and supporting institutionalised social classes of internal subjection and hegemony. However, just as under Ottoman dominion, in the Venetian possessions too the disequilibrium of the economic system could be dealt with through the energies of the procedures of absorption, that is to say by means of the reinforcement of the system of conquest. This did not prevent economic discrimination within the total body of the subjected society, whether in the agricultural as much as in the commercial sector of the economy.

## 2. The economy, its time-spans and areas

### *General characteristics of the economy*

The economy of the subjected is, not exclusively but primarily, agricultural, and its produce is destined, to a great extent whose limits we shall attempt to define, to auto-consumption by the producers thereof. This signifies that all products, agricultural produce above all, do not acquire an exchange value on the market, keeping a direct value of use, that is to say the means of subsistence of the people for maintenance and reproduction of the workforce. The market does not constitute an essential condition for this maintenance and reproduction, without this signifying that it is indifferent to the production process and goods for immediate use. For its existence and perpetuation, another sector of the economy presupposes the production of goods instantly transformable into exchange values through which the acquisition of useful goods is feasible. This is obvious in the case of artisans’ products, since in their ongoing continuation in time and repetition it is not possible to fill the needs of those only who produce them. However, agricultural produce cannot of itself respond to the total consumer needs of the cultivators, either because it does not produce the total required in consumer goods and in the necessary quantities, or because in such needs are included goods not produced by their orbit of production and manufacture. As an example, whereas the farmer may be capable of making the wooden part of a plough, it is not so for the metal part: this he will acquire by resorting to a form of purchase. The broad sector of animal husbandry cannot exist without coming into contact, by exchange

transactions, with the sector of agriculture or also of artisans' products. In a word, auto-consumption is not synonymous with natural self-sufficiency.

Therefore every investment of a workforce is not attendant solely on the production of values of use, nor solely to the production of exchange values: if the former prevails in the agricultural sector and the latter in the artisan's alone, they are finally common to both, evidently always on a relative scale, since a handicraft industry in a general and standard fashion, meets the needs of domestic consumption and is not invariably oriented to a production destined for the market. This is most evident in the manufacture of hand-woven goods, which fill individual basic needs, avoiding the necessity of resorting to a market.

A part of the exchanges is effected, at least partially, not by means of money, as occurs in the case of wages as well as numerous services, notably of the military. Furthermore the offer of natural goods may be paid for with equally natural values, but not all such transactions are circumscribed within a hermetic system of barter destined to the sole satisfaction of immediate consumer needs. Some of the contractors aim at placing the products they acquire in exchange for other or the same products in a system of mercantile transactions, thus transforming such products into exchange values. The economy is consequently dual, both because it concurrently produces values for immediate use as well as exchange, and because in the field of exchange it is concurrently based on both natural and monetary equivalence. It is self-evident that it is not possible to differentiate between a natural and a monetary economy: it is a whole in which all economic functions are interwoven, to varying degrees of cohesion as well as to a varying degree of articulations of extension. The field of transactions obeying to the general equivalence, that of money, is broader and more cohesively articulated than the field of the economy of auto-consumption; in view however of the fact that auto-consumption is never the goal of the economy we are concerned with, as, in other words, the entire economy is not constituted of separate self-sufficing units of production, the sector of auto-consumption coexists with a surplus which in the end is carried to the more broadly extensible sphere of transaction, that is, the market. Thus the breadth of the observations needed to be made in order to demonstrate the mechanisms governing each of the forms of the economy does not have uniformity: the geography of the forms of the economy acquires the greatest cohesive and mutually determining extent in the sphere of transaction, that is to say in the geography of commercial traffic. It is the same case in respect of the time-spans of the economy.

*The repeated time-spans of the economy*

Time in the economy is not a notion having uniformity, neither is it measured by the same gauge in all its sectors and all forms of traffic of goods: the agrarian economy obeys to the periodicity of harvests, however in the sphere of transactions, economic time is at the same time continuous and periodic, for next to the daily market there functions another periodicity, weekly or annual. A periodic market does not signify the absence of the daily, but that the former has greater intensity than the latter regarding the quantity and composition of transactions; it also signifies a broadening of the market base, since in the periodic – the annual trade fair or the weekly market – a multitude of contributors converge from diverse agricultural points of origin. It does however happen that certain of the human factors of the market originate from points with a weak market, and without continuity, such as peasants who come to a town in order to buy and sell. But there are other, this time specific watershed periods of the economy, beyond the repetitious, distinguishing the long term of the economy and giving it periodicity.

*Specific periodicities*

These specific periods obey to major modifications affecting the production process itself, or to conjunctures bringing about the rearrangement of the web of economic values, a rearrangement concerning the volume of the transactions, the directions taken by commercial traffic, the repositioning of each commodity in the fictional pyramid of the structure of commerce. As to the major modifications concerning the production process, the agro-pastoral economy studied here does not present specific moments of time; however, many modifications may be noted in the course of the ages, both in the collective character of those who reaped the benefits of surplus and in the control of the principal means of production, which is of the land. The mechanism whereby production is effected and distributed remains the same and consists in domestic exploitation of land, in the produce of which rights are held by either the state or an absolute or conditional proprietor, which might be the authority itself of the sultan, a religious collectivity or even a private individual, who do not employ paid and seasonal farm labourers but make use of permanently self-employed cultivators, frequently co-owners of the land cultivated by themselves, their ancestors and descendants.



*The conjunctures*

In the sphere of transactions conversely, the repercussions are clearly felt, primarily those concerning external commerce: the conjunctures affecting this sphere are both political and economic, and in general the two are interrelated. Climatic conjuncture, affecting above all the agrarian economy as well as the internal market, without, however, having specific periodic sections, is also reflected in the broader sphere of transactions, to the point of determining the volume of some of them, specifically the grain trade in the orbit of export trading. It is nevertheless difficult to trace specific periodic sections due to conjuncture, capable of periodicising the economy as a whole, especially that concerning the subjected. Thus, although it is feasible to distinguish clear-cut phases in export trading and its attendant, which is commercial transport – maritime in particular – these phases cannot be connected to equivalents in the sector of the agrarian economy, however much in this sector too the repercussions of the exchange economy may be felt in the composition of crops, as for instance the diffusion of the currant culture in the Ionian Venetian possessions of the seventeenth century, for reasons of increased demand for export. Nonetheless such modifications in the composition of cultivations, with their inevitable consequences as to the financing of agrarian economies, rather effect a redistribution of existing systems of land-ownership than create novel terms and conditions in proprietor-cultivator relations; in the instance given above of the spread of currant culture, we have only an extension of relations of plantations on a particular regional scale, that is, the extension of a previously existing system, together with specific monetary influx which did not however affect the system of labour relations, whereby monetary remuneration was limited exclusively to seasonal labour without entirely covering it. In the slow-moving agrarian economy only locally restricted intensifications are met with, the offspring of cultivatory specialisations provoked by external demand, absorbed and defused by the total existing economic system: the prevalent method of production.

*The scale of periodicities*

The periodicity of this latter eludes the chronological points determining the conquest and its abrogation. It is self-evident that when dealing with subjected societies a chronology of their political history imposes itself, as to both initial and final limits of their history, for both define the economic features of the subjected, despite it not being self-evident in the definition of the economy as a

whole to which they belong. However the periodic moments themselves of the conquest and its abrogation are not identical in all the human environments in which it was established. It is therefore a question of fundamental time-periods, of varying duration, as seen from the angle of history as a whole, but from the angle of an economic history, of conventional setting of chronological limits obeying exclusively to the time-periods of the economy. This last cannot, however, be taken into account independently of those who are its subjects, who experience or realise it in general, that is to say cultural and political, therefore general social terms. Insofar as specific time limits are sought in the areas where the social aspect is, in the course of its modifications, interwoven with that of the economy, without its own modifications resulting from the equivalent economic modifications, it is not self-evident that these specific time limits are identical to both societies, of the masters and that of the subjected: for the Ottoman society, or to be more precise in its system of supremacy, the onset of the seventeenth century may be said to mark a transition from a concentrative system to one more decentralised, moreover the beginning of a more passive integration than before into an economy of hegemony, that of Western countries; it may additionally mark the failure of the dynamics of expansion by means of conquest, which was at the same time the progenitor of the economic preconditions nurturing a system of supremacy. All these do not, however, result in the alteration of the total terms of existence of the subjected societies unless inasmuch as developing relations with Western and Central European markets offered the subjected peoples a broader field of economic activity, or to the extent that destabilisation of centralised economic control entailed, according to location, a relative concentration of lands, with the immediate consequence of increasing the resources ensured from ground rents without, as we have noted, this financing labour relations.

There are thus no strong data in the early and concurrently principal sector of the economy to convince that it is susceptible of periodicity when addressed as a whole and not certain of its portions, regional or of cultivations. These last present specific time-spans on a small scale, either because an alteration in the composition of cultivations is encountered, with the side-effect of vertical monetisation of the agrarian economy, or because this alteration is connected to the integration of the main or the major bulk of agricultural produce into the broader, indeed international market. For example, the expansion of the currant culture had as a consequence the reduction of grain culture, reversing the sufficiency of the food supply on the local scale, while at the same time it monetised the economy and incorporated the products in the orbit of export trade, to which moreover the reversal of the structure of cultivations was due.

In this case, an exchange economy actually determined agricultural production, subjecting it to its own time periods, but such interdependence may not be generalised in the total primary sector: periodicities consequently, which may have been valid in the field of an exchange economy, in particular that of export trade, cannot be transferred to the total sector of the agrarian economy. The same is also valid for chronological sections occurring in the field of the state economy, with the generalisation of tenancy of public revenue.

Such practice is of long date and habitual in the course of the sixteenth century, although in the form of lifelong tenancy this practice becomes widespread in the eighteenth century; it results in a reallocation of the surplus and sets in motion strategies of capital which turn to the profit-making potential provided by the assumption by private individuals of tenancy of fiscal rent-collection. It is principally those belonging to the ruling system who participate in these enterprises, although as we have seen the subjects also benefit. Nonetheless modifications or rearrangements in the fiscal system can become specific periodical moments of the same and moreover characterise procedures of economic promotion internal to the ruling section of society, but do not however give periodicity to the entire economy, much less to its principal sector.

#### *The time periods of demography*

The phases in which it is possible indirectly to distinguish demographic movement in the manifest, albeit of unverified data, crisis of the seventeenth century, are not suitable for the establishment of a periodicity which, detached from the field of demography, would be correlated to the movement and physiognomy of the economy. The estimated population decrease, as well as counter-balancing population movements, do not appear to have influenced, to an equal degree, the public finances and the agrarian economy, which preserve their former equilibrium despite the possible, albeit not self-evident, redistribution affecting the control of the land. One of the indications of such redistribution would be the attested sales of land in order to satisfy fiscal liabilities, which might increase in volume on an individual level and, by reason of the population decrease, consequent upon burdening of the actual population by distribution of a tax adjusted to former and more propitious demographic conditions. Nevertheless, the incapacity of agrarian populations to meet their fiscal liabilities resulting in the sale of their land constitutes a constant and cannot be positively correlated to the population decrease. As in the other cases, demographic movement cannot be subsumed in the specific periodicity of the economy: the entire economy, with the existence of a large

self-regulating sector – i.e. the agrarian – is in a position to relieve the more or less localised demographic crisis, for the obvious reason that this economy does not have strong vertical cohesions provoking automatic reactions from the one field to the other, which would, all together, constitute it. Non-agrarian consumer centres, urban that is to say, do not exert on the agrarian sector pressures capable of transferring their own demographic crisis to them, for the demographic weight of such centres falls short of that of the farmlands, to the point where the agrarian surplus, despite the rural demographic crisis, can respond to their own consumer needs. Under such terms, a population concentration of the density of Constantinople, at times of demographic crisis, or disarticulation of the countryside's equilibrium, could become in the seventeenth century a refuge for the destabilised populations of the latter.

*Dissimilarity of chronological criteria*

The fields of the economy, as well as those interwoven with it, each have their own time periods which, despite their intersections, are not subsumable under a general heading of time: this is due, to a degree, to the application of differing criteria for the periodicity of each field. The agrarian sector is to a relative extent defined by the inelasticity of technology, which may permit solely the greater or lesser application of its given and constant capacities: works of land reclamation, irrigation, sufficient force of attraction, fertilising, watering, implement improvement. All these capacities are always employed with divergences without however altering the general features of the landscape in finite distinguishable time-phases that would ensue from the diversification of chronology. As has been noted, chiefly the agrarian sector is determined by the perpetuation of labour relations and the forms of land ownership; its monetisation through commercialisation and its repercussion on the redistribution of composition of cultivations do not result in the modification of – on the contrary it perpetuates – the same relations in such a way as that the partial incorporation of the agrarian economy into the commercial should not bring about more than limited alterations in the structure of the former. For this reason the periodicities of the commercial economy are not subordinate to those of the agrarian economy. The same is also valid for the periodicity of the stock-breeding economy in correlation to its interconnection with handicraft production, especially weaving.

In the field of the mercantile economy, quantitative modifications, whether at the level of the traffic of values or at the level of mobilising human dynamics, or rather the build-up of trade routes, play a specific role more powerful, albeit

not of the same intensity, than the corresponding role of modifications played in the world of agricultural cultivations and stock-breeding. Trade does not alter fundamentally, however widespread are certain techniques such as bills of exchange or others proliferate, such as commercial companies: it is their human subjects that alter together with the roles they play, the factors thereof, with particular intensification in the eighteenth century, being the conquered. These modifications define the periodicities in a sphere of transactions seen from the point of view of the subjected peoples.

### *Capital transfer*

Behaviour patterns primarily describable as economic are not suited to periodicities as a total: in an economy in which trade in unprocessed agricultural or livestock products is accompanied by trade in artisans' products, therefore processed, it is to be expected that the possibility of "capital transfer" should be placed on a theoretical level or more neutrally, financial dispositions, from one sector to the other: the transfer, for instance, of capital deriving from the agricultural sector or from commercial activities, to that of the handicraft industry; if this were to occur, it would be logical to seek the consequential delimitations of time or, in other words an economic periodicity of essence. In reality, however, the phenomena appear under a different light: on the one hand artisans' production has its own production procedure, which may be described as simple commercial production, according to which the artisan has the means of production, that is the tools, as well as the necessary capital resources permitting him the acquisition of raw materials, producing, with the aid of a workforce dependent upon him, a product he himself constitutes a commodity and of which he is himself the merchant. On the other hand, the customer for the trade of the handicraft industry product places an order for its manufacture, providing its manufacturer with the raw material, who in this way has no other buyer than the customer. In the second instance, the commercial capital is invested in the production of the handicraft industry, while at the same time restricting the limits of its autonomous participation in the market; the commercial capital is not directed to the handicraft industry in order to render the same capital as the artisan's, to owe its existence to the economic logic of production of goods through goods, that is to say industrial capitalistic logic. It therefore does not modify the terms of handicraft industry production and for this reason does not act in a diversifying manner, and is consequently not suitable for the creation of a new quality of time. Merchants do not provide artisans with raw material so as to become artisans themselves, but in order to

trade the handicraft product on a market not always accessible to the artisan-producer, also at anticipated different prices, that is to say higher than those valid in the market in which the artisan himself participates as the merchant of his products.

### *The geography of the economy*

The fields of the economy do not have a uniform geography and its human factors are active in time-spans of diverse extent. Additionally, the primary sector under scrutiny extends over an expanse roughly corresponding to today's Greek territorial limits, whereas the world of trade is seen in a broader space transcending these limits. Their extremities are determined by the sea- and land- trade routes covering considerable distances and the destinations of emigration, in short, the circulation of people and of goods. The vehicles of such circulation are caravans and ships, and in the case of land traffic, speed is determined by the pace of humans and their beasts of burden; increased speed, with fewer stops along a route, result from the initial appearance, in the late nineteenth century, of railways and steamships, instead of sailing ships. As the rate of speed is altered, the local range and stages of travel also change, the stop-overs, even the part played by islands on a ship's route. These changes entail the appearance and establishment of a specific co-efficient of time which ends the long-standing circulation, with its stable rhythms, which once dominated trade. They will be examined concurrently and periodicised, so that in this book its time-span will be of greater duration than the equivalent of the agrarian economy and extend beyond it.

The productive units of the agricultural sector – at the same time the habitation units, the villages – do not constitute a cultivatory continuum except insofar as permitted by the configuration of the terrain; in order to constitute an economic continuum, it necessitates the circulation of the products of their cultivation, or of the money into which they are eventually converted. Fewer of the producers participate in the circulation of the products than the intermediaries between them and the markets, i.e. the merchants and their intermediaries. The range of movement of the former is limited and determined by the distance of the nearest market, permanent or periodic. Their geographic circumscription is therefore limited, and broadens only when instead of their produce they offer their labour as a workforce, transporting it for considerable distances across land and sea; equally when rather than their labour, in the case of transhumance their flocks are underway because natural conditions do not permit permanent settlement in the same area. Geography as

basis and capacity of the economy is modifiable for each of its human factors. Nonetheless, for none of them is there economic continuation, meaning a uniform market: the conditions of exchange are determined by the intermediary elements corresponding to the multiple markets in which participation is not feasible in all its phases, for all of the contributory factors of the economy. A portion thereof – that is the total of immediate agricultural producers – sees their produce pass into the market under procedures outwith the economy, in the same way as those which through taxation or levy of ground rents make a tradable commodity of a part of the production without any preceding act of purchase. Prices are also fixed at levels and in ways preventing the producers from taking active part in their formation. It is a case of a market shaped by inequivalent values, a market of unequal exchange.

The market is distinguished into parallel sections of feeble inter-infiltration: the market of the agricultural world, where auto-consumption limits its composition and principally, its range, and in which numerous intermediaries become proprietors of the surplus in economic or non-economic ways; the market whose purpose is to satisfy consumer needs of mainly urban populations – what is known as the bazaar economy – in the forming of which, of specific gravity are institutionalised duress and the restrictive social policies crystallised in the economic and social functions of the guilds; also that the market serving the export trade which, albeit liberated from the constraints of the internal market, owes its existence, with regard to the commercialisation of export goods, to the unequal exchange predominating in the primary sector, that is its principal supplier. These markets are projected geographically as seen from the angle of the economy: the continuation of space is not determined solely by the repetition of the same prevailing cultivations but also by the unequal trade traffic conducted by those who place the commercialised products in circulation. It is a traffic capable of creating regional economic zones, at the same time indirectly connecting markets separated by great distances, without these connections bestowing economic uniformity on the area. Administrative borders, as well as the limits of inhabited settlements are at the same time economic borders, and it is in this relation that tariffs are regulated: such goods as are transported from one administrative district to another, from one village to another, or such goods as arrive at the city market are subject to excise duties diversified only in the case of such as reach parts outside the borders of dominion. Prices of variously located products are modified on a scale, in the same manner, besides, as was of old valid for the fixing of prices of such goods as reached exportation. Furthermore, the geographic range of activity of the artisan producers is not unlimited,

something similar being valid for the foreign merchants who either shared out the market amongst themselves or do not have access to all its points. In short, merchants and transporters moving across major distances may traverse an area, and in the course of their travel, provide the markets they passed through with products or re-stock from them, but the extent of the area is constituted of economic pockets, which, although they may have become crossroads, do not lose their integrality in substance.

It is this multifaceted economic world the present volume intends to examine, distinguishing it into its thematic entities and periodic categories arising out of it itself; it is the world of the subjected in their enclaves of productivity, its economic position in the system of dominance imposed by conquest, its interconnection with the broader sphere of transactions and its consequent partial or gradual incorporation therein, whether as the creator of values or as their manager.

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