

Revised: 28 December 2006

Eco. 301Y1: The Economic History of Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe to 1750

Topic no. 10 [23]: The Decline of Italy and Spain in the 17th Century: Aspects of the ‘General Crisis’ or Independent Phenomena? [Topic no. 23]

A. General Readings: The ‘General Crisis of the 17th Century’ and the Hobsbawm Thesis

- * 1. Eric Hobsbawm, ‘The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century: I’, Past & Present, no. 5 (May 1954), 33 - 53; and ‘The Crisis of the 17th Century: II’, no. 6 (November 1954), 44 - 65. Republished as ‘The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century’, in Trevor Aston, ed., Crisis in Europe, 1560 - 1660: Essays from Past and Present (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 5 - 58.
- * 2. E.H. Kossmann, E.J. Hobsbawm, J.H. Hexter, Roland Mousnier, J.H. Elliott, Lawrence Stone, H.R. Trevor Roper, ‘Symposium: Trevor Roper’s ‘General Crisis’’, Past & Present, no. 18 (November 1960), 8 - 42. Excerpts [Mousnier, Elliott, Trevor-Roper] republished in Trevor Aston, ed., Crisis in Europe, 1560 - 1660: Essays from Past and Present (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 97 - 116.
- * 3. Eric Hobsbawm, ‘The Seventeenth Century in the Development of Capitalism’, Science and Society, 24 (1960), 97-112.
- * 4. Geoffrey Parker and L.M. Smith, eds., The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century (London, 1978). Collected essays on this theme [see main bibliography]

B. The Decline of Spain in the 17th century:

- *1. Jaime Vicens Vives, ‘The Decline of Spain in the Seventeenth Century’, in his Economic History of Spain, translated by Frances Lopez-Morillas (Princeton, 1969), Chapters 29-30. Republished in Carlo Cipolla, ed., Economic Decline of Empires (London, 1970), pp. 121-67.
- *2. J.H. Elliott, ‘The Decline of Spain’, Past and Present, No. 20 (Nov. 1961), pp. 52 - 75; revised edn. published in Trevor Aston, ed., Crisis in Europe, 1560 - 1660: Essays from Past and Present (London, 1965), pp. 167 - 93; and in Carlo Cipolla, ed., The Economic Decline of Empires (London, 1970), pp. 168-97.
- *3. Mauricio Drelichman, ‘All That Glitters: Precious Metals, Rent Seeking and the Decline of Spain’, European Review of Economic History, 9:3 (December 2005), 313-36. See also Mauricio Drelichman, ‘The Curse of Moctezuma: American Silver and the Dutch Disease’, Explorations in Economic History, 42:3 (July 2005), 349-80.
- *4. Henry Kamen, ‘The Decline of Spain: A Historical Myth’, Past and Present, No. 81 (1978), 24-50.
- 5. J.T. TePaske and H.S. Klein, ‘The Seventeenth-Century Crisis in New Spain’, Past & Present, no. 90 (1981), 116-35. See criticism by Henry Kamen and J. K. Israel, and rejoinder by TePaske and Klein in Past and Present, No. 97 (Nov. 1982), 144-56, 156-61.
- 6. Michael Weisser, ‘The Decline of Castile Revisited: The Case of Toledo’, Journal of European Economic History, 2 (1973), 614-39; and see also Michael Weisser, ‘The Agrarian Depression in

Seventeenth-Century Spain', Journal of Economic History, 42 (1982), 149-54.

7. Earl Hamilton, 'The Decline of Spain', Economic History Review, 8 (1938): in E. M. Carus-Wilson, ed., Essays in Economic History, Vol. I (London, 1954), pp. 215-26.
8. David Goodman, 'Armadas in an Age of Scarce Resources: Struggling to Maintain the Fleet in Seventeenth-Century Spain', The Journal of European Economic History, 28:1 (Spring 1999), 77-112.
9. José Ingacio Andrés Ucendo, 'Castile's Tax System in the Seventeenth Century', The Journal of European Economic History, 30:3 (Winter 2001), 597-617.

C. The Decline of Italy in the 17th Century:

- *1. Carlo Cipolla, 'The Decline of Italy: The Case of a Fully Matured Economy', Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 5 (1952). Subsequently revised as 'Il declino economico dell'Italia', in Boringhieri, ed., Storia dell'economia italiana (Turin, 1959), and then translated by Janet Pullan for republication as: 'The Economic Decline of Italy', in Brian Pullan, ed., Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy (London, 1968), pp. 127-45; and also in Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., The Economic Decline of Empires (London, 1970), 196-214.
- *2. Ruggiero Romano, 'Italy in the Crisis of the Seventeenth Century', in Peter Earle, ed. Essays in European Economic History (London, 1974), pp. 185-98. [Original version: 'L'Italia nella crisi del secolo XVII', Studi Storici, 9 (1968), 723-41.]
3. Domenico Sella, 'Crisis and Transformation in Venetian Trade', and 'Rise and Fall in the Venetian Woollen Industry', both in Brian Pullan, ed., Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London, 1968), pp. 88 - 105, 106-27. See also other essays by Lane, Cipolla (no. 1 above), Romano, Pullan, and Woolf.
4. D. Sella, 'Industrial Production in Seventeenth Century Italy: A Re-Appraisal', Explorations in Economic History, 6 (1969), 235-53.
5. Ralph Davis, 'England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670', in F.J. Fisher, ed. Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England (London, 1961), pp. 117-37.
6. Richard T. Rapp, 'The Unmaking of the Mediterranean Trade Hegemony: International Trade Rivalry and the Commercial Revolution', Journal of Economic History 35 (1975), 499-525.
7. Luigi De Rosa, 'Land and Sea Transport and Economic Depression in the Kingdom of Naples from the XIVth to the XVIIIth Century', Journal of European Economic History, 25:2 (Fall 1996), 339-68.
8. Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, English Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Italy, Cambridge Studies in Italian History and Culture (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
9. Molly Greene, 'Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century', Past & Present, no. 174 (February 2002), 42-71.

QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent did the Spanish and Italian economies suffer economic decline in the 17th century? In what sectors, principally? Were their demographic slumps a cause or consequence of that decline?
2. What were the causes of these economic declines: exogenous or endogenous to the Spanish and Italian economies? In what ways were the economic declines related; and in what ways did they differ from each?
3. Were these 'economic declines' manifestations of the 'general crisis of the 17th century'? Or were they completely independent phenomena?
4. If you believe that there were economic crises and/or a secular downswing, what were the basic causes: exogenous or endogenous?
 - (a) demographic causes--and demographic consequences?
 - (b) monetary forces and price movements: again distinguish causes from effects;
 - (c) 'built in' or internal defects of the expanding European economy in the 16th-century;
 - (d) disruption and dislocation from famines, plagues, warfare, etc.;
 - (e) government policies, economic nationalism, and Mercantilism.