to other parts of France and avers that his view of the corporations in Manosque as embryonic requires further documentation.

Anna Esposito shows how the local government of Narni increased the production of wool by legislating production of sufficient middle- and lower-quality cloth for the city and surrounding district to reduce the amount of imports. The idea of government-encouraged manufacturing has a long history. Ivana Ait discusses the kinds of skilled and less skilled workers needed to outfit a crusading ship and shows the substantial wage discrepancy between the knowledgeable governors of the ship, the men of arms, and the lowly rowers.

Pierre Hurtubise analyzes the role of the Church as employer, showing that, between 1526 and 1527, the courts of the 26 cardinals established in Rome employed 4,000 people out of a population of 55,000, while probably creating many other jobs for those who serviced the courts. From auditors to the major-domo who ran the household, to the newly invented coachman, the stable-boys, aides, valets, and serving-boys, the Church provided jobs and often a means of rising in status, for example, from kitchen-boy to chef. Maria Mazzi extends the discussion of labourers to those she terms "marginal", men who were underemployed or mostly unemployed, sometimes drifting temporarily into the category of beggars or flirting with crime in order to sustain themselves. These marginal workers, as in our times, were the products of a period of economic reorganization.

Melissa Bullard's discussion of middle managers in Renaissance banks illustrates that relatively modern concept of the rise to power and influence of obscure persons through knowledge and skill, although the success of the two *fattori* (agents) whose fortunes she traces was tied to their connections with the powerful banking families of the Medici and Strozzi. K. R. Bartlett, who focuses on English students at Padua, points to a new concept of the "gentleman" which was also ultimately tied to economic success. It no longer sufficed to be of noble birth, especially for the lower gentry; knowledge, skills, and at least a patina of culture and manners were required for furthering careers and maintaining family status. The final paper, by Edward D. English, shows how the elite families of Siena attempted to juggle personal and family interests with those of the public weal. The interplay of self-interest, which includes the success and status of family and social group, and the concern for those victimized by the economic system is the driving factor in the history of the modern world. Dolan's *Travail et travailleurs* is one contribution to a better understanding of the crucial economic processes which gave birth to that world.

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Lois Green Carr, Russell K. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh – *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1991. Pp. xxi, 362.

Robert Cole died in 1663 on a trip to England, having established a small farm ten years earlier in Maryland. Ten years later, in 1673, his executor, Luke Gardiner,

after whom the book should properly be named, was required by the judge of the probate court to prepare detailed accounts of his stewardship. The documents that emerged in this process constitute the basis of many of the conclusions the authors make about their subject.

One of the oddities of early American historiography, otherwise an enormously rich and creative field for scholars, has been the neglect of agriculture, the means by which most families survived. John J. McCusker's and Russell R. Menard's *The Economy of British America, 1607–1790* (University of North Carolina Press, 1985) virtually ignored the subject. When they addressed the rural economy, only the horticulture of Maryland's and Virginia's tobacco and, to a very limited degree, South Carolina's rice drew their attention. The long-ago projected first volume of a five-volume *Economic History of the United States*, still unpublished, stumbled principally on Lawrence Harper's inability to estimate agricultural production at different points before 1776. How animal husbandry or tillage was conducted, how it was financed, and how it attained whatever level it had reached by the 1770s have remained, until recently, largely a matter of unsupported guesses, even when achieved by highly inventive methods. It seemed for several generations of scholars an unduly obtuse subject for research. The best documents, useful to the study of the economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had come from imperial or colonial legislation to raise revenues. Such documents relate to import and excise duties, shipping, bounties, and internal taxes, but not to agriculture, tobacco being the sole exception.

More recent efforts to study individual communities, towns, or counties, much of the effort being driven by scholars determined to find a place for women in the "formal" economic past, have employed a huge range of court documents including, where they exist, account books of shopkeepers and more rarely of husbandmen themselves. County court records dealing with civil matters, especially those of probate courts, yielded a huge quantity of miscellaneous documents that reveal much on retail commodity prices, the value of different types of land, credit networks, levels of debt, and instruments of security. Where a Chancery Court existed, as in Nova Scotia from 1751, goods and chattels attached for bail or to satisfy writs of execution in causes related to foreclosure or injunction were inventoried and current values assigned by sworn appraisers, much the same as with probate court appraisals. From the painstaking study of such historical sources the nature of the rural economy is at last emerging.

The subject is of compelling interest, since modern scholars believe that agriculture as practised in North America in the last 300 years has resulted in the erosion of half the topsoil. No civilization has ever managed such destruction so quickly, thus making North American farmers perhaps the very last group to give others advice on the subject, or their sons and daughters to write insightfully about agricultural history. What is unclear is how much of this damage was done by American colonial farmers, who contemporaries believed practised "exceeding ill-husbandry" (p. xvii).

This book defends the tobacco grower! It takes the view that, where land was cheap and labour dear, there was little incentive to cultivate intensively in the English methods, with which settlers were familiar. Parenthetically the same

explanation could be made for late twentieth-century agriculture, in which mining the soil and destroying it with pesticides and herbicides pass for advanced arable farming, and ensuring dairy cows a foreshortened lifespan by milking them thrice daily passes for efficient animal husbandry.

Colonial husbandmen and their families, Carr, Menard, and Walsh assert, were wisely following an economic imperative, which they were wise enough to divine. They ignore that, in contrast to the aboriginal system, which always allowed hunting and fishing to flourish along with agriculture, Robert Cole's "achievement" contributed directly to rapid overpopulation and over-cultivation, first destroying much of the habitat for wildlife and then threatening the soil itself. That seems to me to be a truer legacy of early and later North American agriculture than the one set forth here.

The authors also claim that "Chesapeake tobacco planters created a new style of agriculture" (p. xviii) and hence deserve our admiration for making a virtue of necessity. Settlers made few advances on the methods of clearing and cultivation used for centuries by aboriginals. Their two principal crops, corn and tobacco, were both highly destructive of soil fertility. Obliged to use a fallow cycle of up to 20 years and avoiding the use of manure, as it gave an unwanted flavour to tobacco, they erected neither fences nor barns for their livestock, nor did they even provide them with winter fodder. Still, their neglected animals, whether measured by slaughter weight or rate of successful calving, appear not to have been seriously inferior to the typical puny specimens that passed for livestock in North America as late as 1800.

Even if their main thesis is worth debating, the authors have written what is unquestionably the finest book yet on colonial American agriculture. From a wide range of recent research, to which they have already made substantial contributions, they draw a sophisticated and quite believable picture of the mid-seventeenth century. Robert Cole's was a brief era of yeomen-dominated farm households with the aid of their white male indentured servants, before the societal transformation to the great plantation and its black slaves and white indentured female servants. Writing in unadorned language, the authors have been able to make remarkable sense of the Cole account books and allied documents, all lovingly reproduced and intelligently annotated.

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Harvey Chisick – *The Production, Distribution, and Readership of a Conservative Journal of the Early French Revolution: The* Ami du Roi *of the Abbé Royou.* Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1992. Pp. xiv, 262.

Historians have recently devoted a great deal of research to the role of the press in the French Revolution. Jeremy Popkin's recent work, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France, 1789–1799* (Duke University Press, 1990), argues that the newspaper political press was key both to allowing revolutionary representatives to claim the sanction of public opinion and to defining revolutionary events into a compre-