

ELISABETH SCHWARZE. — *Soziale Struktur und Besitzverhältnisse der ländlichen Bevölkerung Ostthüringens im 16. Jahrhundert*, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1975.

Elisabeth Schwarze has examined 24 Turk-tax registers from 1542, 5 *Defensionsregister* from 1546/7 and 3 Land-tax registers from 1557/9 in a substantial region of Thuringia, administered at the local level by officials of the Electors, ecclesiastical foundations, town councils and local nobility. She seeks to tabulate all the different actual land-holdings of those who were assessed for tax. She tracks down every item that was taxable, be it land, home, cattle or other moveable capital goods. Tax-payers are divided into four groups; those with more than 200 fl taxable wealth (Group I); those with 101 to 200 fl (Group II); 51 to 100 fl (Group III); and 1 to 50 fl (Group IV). Cattle ownership and use is also tabulated. Her purpose is to give an exact analysis of the relationships between social structure, property and wealth distribution within the rural population of East Thuringia in the middle of the 16th century. She wishes to show how greatly the socio-economic position of separate sections of the population varied even within a relatively small locality. The social historian of sixteenth century Reformation Germany must work in piecemeal fashion at local levels and seek to compare only like with like from extant contemporaneous tax registers and estate records. After exhaustive tabulation of her registers, she concludes that the hidage system still worked for the majority of the peasant farmers, although in only two out of eleven local districts did the majority of peasants still farm a full hide of land, though a substantial minority farmed even more than one hide. From here the division into smallholders and cottagers becomes difficult since distinctions between the two are easily blurred. She therefore concludes that these groups of small farmers and, in effect, rural craftsmen and agricultural labourers are probably the most heterogeneous of village social strata in the 16th century. They include *Bauern, Feldgärtner, Hintersiedler, Handwerker und Gewerbetreibende* (p. 151), and they vary in number from village to village and Lordship to Lordship. Similar problems of demarcation are encountered at the point where in terms of wealth, land and tax assessments the smallholders merge with the traditional hidage peasants. The number of householders without land is still very small although it varies greatly from locality to locality at less than 1% to over 7% of the taxable population. Even more significant is the fluctuation in numbers of the landless who were renting or living in strangers' houses at less than 1% to nearly 15% of the village tax-population. The number of living-in, unmarried servants (*gesinde*) caught up in the tax-registers varies greatly, too. However, they do make up a very large percentage of the total taxable population in several rural districts (although each individual's poll-tax contribution was relatively small). Numbers vary from 5% to over 42% of the total taxable population. Differences seem to have been due to inheritance customs. West and Middle Thuringia went in for partible inheritance. In effect South-east Thuringia retained only in name the custom of inheritance either by the eldest or youngest. In practice fragmentation had taken place in such a way that social distinctions tended to become blurred. Proximity to town tended to increase this development. However, in East Thuringia the tendency was still only towards the formation of smallholdings. Further fragmentation (and pauperisation) of large sections of the village population did not come until much later. These findings seem to accord with those of the leading historical demographer of early modern Germany, Karl-Heinz Blaschke.¹ The accents are on detail and on caution in handling the evidence. It is

¹ K.H. BLASCHKE: *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Sachsens*, (Weimar: 1967); "Soziale Gliederung und Entwicklung der sächsischen Landbevölkerung," *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie*, 4 (1956): 144-155.

a tendency in East German historiography of the Reformation — the era of the early bourgeois revolution — that is most welcome. The study is prefaced by a lengthy introduction, written by Hans Eberhardt, on the value to social historians of sixteenth century land and turk-taxes. These sources are above all invaluable for assessing the dynamics of village economic and social structure, and enough of them seem to survive to encourage a middle-regional approach steering between macro and micro studies of reformation and development in the rural classes of pre-industrial Germany. This is a very wise, new approach from the German Democratic Republic, and it owes its greatest debt to one of its more neglected historians, Karl-Heinz Blaschke.

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T.W. MOODY, F.X. MARTIN, F.J. BYRNE, eds. — *A New History of Ireland*, III: *Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1976.

The idea of a 'new', comprehensive history of Ireland goes back fifteen years; and since 1968 the series has been in active preparation, under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy. The nine parts of this cooperative effort will cover the whole course of Irish history to the mid-1970s. "The work is not a series of isolated volumes but a harvesting of the best contemporary scholarship available for each period" (p.v). The first volume of this ambitious project to appear is the third, which covers early modern Ireland. All students of Anglo-Irish history will welcome this first installment because as the output of scholarly work on Irish history has increased during the past quarter-century, many have felt the lack of a broad yet detailed history that draws together the best of this scholarship in a convenient format. The *New History of Ireland* satisfies this need admirably. This initial volume accords a full, balanced treatment to a pivotal century and a half of Irish history (1534-1691). The impressive organisation, editing and production of this volume owe much to the diligence of Professor T.W. Moody, who for nearly forty years has been a driving force behind the advancement of the scholarly study of Irish history. This splendid book, appearing in the year of Professor Moody's retirement as Professor of Modern History at Trinity College, Dublin, is an appropriate testimonial to all the fine work that he has done over the years on behalf of Ireland and Irish history.

The years falling between the reign of Henry VIII and the defeat of James II was a time when the English dimension exerted many pressures on Irish society. During the 1530s Henry began to pay greater attention to Ireland. Until that time the English presence and influence was limited largely to the eastern part of Leinster, with its centre at Dublin. Beyond 'the Pale' there remained the Irish society that had existed for centuries. The language and social customs were gaelic, the economy was pastoral, and political power was dispersed among a myriad of family groups and local alliances. Among the gaelic Irish (within the Pale and outside it) were the descendants of Norman invaders and other early English settlers, the *sean-Ghail* or Old English. Conscious of their English ancestry and often influential landholders and wielders of regional power, the Old English had mingled closely with the Irish, and by the mid-sixteenth century they shared family ties, traditions and the Catholic religion with the Irish. But they remained important for the maintenance and extension of English rule in Ireland. While Irish loyalties were local, the Old English for the most part supported the English