

Archaeology and History of Peasantries 2

Themes, Approaches and Debates

Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo (ed.)

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Resumen

Este libro es el segundo de una serie de volúmenes colectivos dedicados a la Historia del campesinado preindustrial en la Península Ibérica y otros espacios europeos realizados en el marco del proyecto de investigación «Peasantry Agency and Sociopolitical Complexity in North-western Iberia in Medieval Ages». A pesar de la relevancia que esta temática ha tenido a lo largo del siglo xx, en los últimos decenios ha conocido una fuerte inflexión como resultado de la reorientación de la Historia Social en términos culturalistas y el giro posmoderno. No obstante, la emergencia de una nueva arqueología rural y del campesinado, la creciente atención a los paisajes rurales, la renovación de la historia social europea y las profundas consecuencias que están teniendo tanto la crisis financiera de los años 2007-2008 como la recesión generada por la pandemia del COVID-19 han creado las condiciones para una renovación profunda de esta temática. Adoptando una innovadora perspectiva diacrónica, estos volúmenes exploran algunos de los principales temas y enfoques teóricos que se están desarrollando en la actualidad en torno a esta problemática. En términos cronológicos los trabajos incluidos en este segundo volumen cubren una larga diacronía comprendida entre la Prehistoria y la Contemporaneidad en Escandinavia, Reino Unido, Italia, Francia, Portugal y España.

Laburpena

Liburu hau, «Peasantry Agency and Sociopolitical Complexity in North-western Iberia in Medieval Ages» ikerketa-proiektuaren barruan, Iberiar Penintsulako eta Europako beste gune batzuetako industriaurreko nekazarien historiari eskainitako bigarren liburuki kolektiboa da. Gai honek xx. mendean benetako garrantzia hartu izan zuen arren, azken hamarkadetan inflexio handia nabaritu da historia sozialak, termino kulturalistetan eta ikuspuntu posmodernoaren ondorioz, izan duen birbideratzea dela eta. Halere, nekazal eta nekazarien arkeologia berri baten sorrerak, nekazal paisaietan jarritako arretak eta Europako historia sozialaren berritzeak gai honetan berrikuntza sakonak sortzeko baldintzak sortu dituzte. Guzti honetan, eragina izan dute baita ere 2007-2008 urteetako finantza-krisiak zein COVID-19 pandemiak. Ikuspegi diakroniko berritzaile batetik abiatuz, liburuki hauetan gai honi buruzko autu eta ikuspuntu teoriko nagusiak aztertzen dira. Kronologikoki, bigarren liburuki honetako lanek aurrehistoria eta aro garaikidea bitarteko diakronia luzea aztertzen dute Eskandinavian, Erresuma Batuan, Italian, Frantzian, Portugalen eta Espainian.

Abstract

This book is the second in a series of collective volumes dedicated to the History of the pre-industrial peasantry in the Iberian Peninsula and other European spaces carried out within the framework of the research project 'Peasantry Agency and Sociopolitical Complexity in North-western Iberia in Medieval Ages'. Despite the relevance that this theme has had throughout the twentieth century, in recent decades it has known a strong renovation because of the reorientation of Social History in culturalist terms and the postmodern turn. However, the emergence of a new rural and peasant archaeology, the growing attention to rural landscapes, the renewal of European social history have created the conditions for a profound reorientation of this theme. Adopting an innovative diachronic perspective, these volumes explore some

of the main themes and theoretical approaches that are currently being developed around this problem. In chronological terms the works included in this second volume cover a long diachrony between Prehistory and Contemporaneity in Scandinavia, The United Kingdom, Italy, France, Portugal and Spain.

Riassunto

Questo libro è il secondo di una serie di volumi collettivi dedicati alla Storia del mondo contadino pre-industriale nella Penisola Iberica ed in altre aree d'Europa, realizzato nell'ambito del progetto di ricerca «Peasantry Agency and Sociopolitical Complexity in North-western Iberia in Medieval Ages». Nonostante questa tematica abbia avuto una certa rilevanza in tutto il xx secolo, negli ultimi decenni ha visto una forte inflessione di interesse, conseguenza sia del nuovo orientamento della Storia Sociale verso approcci della storia culturale, sia della svolta postmoderna. Tuttavia, vari fattori hanno creato anche le condizioni per un rinnovamento di questa tematica: la nascita di una nuova archeologia rurale e del mondo contadino, la crescente attenzione ai paesaggi agrari e rurali, il rinnovamento della storia sociale europea e le profonde conseguenze che stanno avendo sia la crisi finanziaria degli anni 2007-2008 sia la recessione generata dalla pandemia COVID-19. Adottando una prospettiva innovatrice di tipo diacronico, questi volumi toccano alcuni dei principali temi e approcci teorici che oggi si stanno sviluppando riguardo a questa problematica. Dal punto di vista cronologico gli articoli inclusi in questo secondo volume coprono un'ampia diacronia compresa tra la Preistoria e l'Età Contemporanea in Scandinavia, Regno Unito, Italia, Francia, Portogallo e Spagna.

Resumé

Ce livre est le deuxième d'une série de volumes collectives consacrés à l'Histoire du paysannat préindustriel dans la péninsule ibérique et dans d'autres espaces européens réalisés dans le cadre du projet de recherche « Peasantry Agency and Sociopolitical Complexity in North-western Iberia in Medieval Ages ». Malgré la pertinence que cette thématique a eu tout au long du 20ème siècle, c'est dans les derniers décennies qu'elle a connu une forte inflexion à la suite de l'Histoire Sociale culturaliste et le tournant postmoderniste. Néanmoins, l'émergence d'une nouvelle archéologie rurale et du paysannat, l'attention croissante aux paysages ruraux, la rénovation de l'histoire sociale européenne et les profondes conséquences de la crise financière des années 2007-2008 ainsi que la récession générée par la pandémie de COVID-19 ont créé les conditions d'un renouvellement profonde de cette thématique. En adoptant une innovante perspective diachronique, ces volumes explorent certaines des questions principales et approches théoriques que sont en cours de développement autour de cette problématique. Chronologiquement, les travaux inclus en ce seconde volume couvrent une longue diachronie entre la Préhistoire et la Contemporanéité en Scandinaie, le Royaume-Uni, l'Italie, la France, Portugal et l'Espagne.

About the authors

Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo is professor of Medieval Archaeology in the University of the Basque Country and Principal Investigator of the Research Group in Heritage and Cultural Landscapes. His research focused on Social Complexity, Rural Societies, Mediterranean Archaeology, and Building Archaeology. Recent publications include 'Arqueología de una comunidad campesina medieval: Zornoztegi' (Bilbao, 2019). Currently, he is preparing a book about the Archaeology of Medieval Peasantry in Iberia.

José-Miguel Lana Berasain is Associate Professor of Economic History at the Public University of Navarre, Pamplona/Iruña. He presided the Navarrese Institute of Economic and Social History 'Gerónimo de Uztariz' (2000-2005), and was part of the Council of the Spanish Society of Agrarian History (SEHA). Since 2019, he is Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Historia Agraria* (ISSN 1139-1472; e-ISSN 2340-3659).

Jesús Izquierdo Martín is currently a lecturer at the Autonomous University of Madrid. As historian, his research focuses on the origins of some concepts that represented the reality; on the sociological and historical foundations of subjectivities; on the process of elaboration of traumatic episodes; and on the construction of citizenship through the collective memory. He is also interested on public history, and specially on citizen collaboration in the production of historical knowledge.

Giovanni Levi, Professor Emeritus of Early Modern History at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, uses the micro-historical method to show how many important things happen even when it seems that nothing does. His most recent publications are: *Microhistorias* (Bogota, 2019) and the re-edition (with a new preface in controversy with *Global History*) of *The Immaterial Legacy. Carriera di un esorcista nel Piemonte del Seicento* (Milan, 2020).

João Pedro Tereso is an archaeologist and archaeobotanist working at CIBIO-InBIO (Research Center in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources, University of Porto). He carries out investigation in several subjects within vegetation history and past agricultural systems, with particular emphasis in the relation between social trends, environmental changes and the evolution of agriculture.

Inés Sastre is Scientific Researcher, IH. CSIC. Her particular research interest is the evolution of social structures in pre-Roman and Roman rural territories of the Western Iberian Peninsula and the theoretical models on social formations that could help to explain ancient societies.

Brais X. Currás's is currently postdoctoral researcher in IH (CSIC). His research focuses on the social and territorial organisation of Iron Age communities with the onset of Roman domination in northwestern Iberia, employing both landscape archaeology and anthropological perspectives. His particular interest is the economy of the Roman Empire, particularly the exploitation of gold and salt.

Damián Romero (PhD Archaeology) is a specialist in Landscape Archaeology. His studies have focused on the changes in territory and society during the Iron Age and the Roman Empire in the southern area of the ancient Astur region, mainly in Zamora (Spain) and Trás-os-Montes (Portugal). He currently works at the Archeology R + D + i Laboratories (IH-CSIC).

Esther Pascua Echegaray is currently a lecturer at the Madrid Open University. Her research interests range from 12th-century European constitutional history to livestock, natural resources, landscapes, and common land and communities in the Middle Ages. Current research focuses on processes of inclusion/exclusion in 15th-Century Castilian towns.

Julián M. Ortega is currently an Associated Lecturer in Early Medieval History at the University of Zaragoza. His research focuses on Islamic Archaeology, Medieval Rural History and Materiality of Power Relations. He has authored numerous books, editions, and papers. Relevant publications include *La conquista islámica de la Península Ibérica. Una perspectiva arqueológica* (Madrid, 2018), and *Razīniyya. Súbditos y soberanos en la taifa de Santa María de Albarracín, siglo v.H/v.dC.* (Granada, 2021). The Current research focuses on Public History of Spanish Medieval Archaeology.

Rosamond Faith is the author of *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (1997) and, with Debby Banham, *Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming* (2014) She has taught medieval history at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London and in the Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford and is now retired. In 2020 she was awarded the Thirsk Prize by the British Agricultural History Society for *The Moral Economy of the Countryside: Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman England*. She is currently working on the depiction of rural workers in the paintings of Gainsborough, Stubbs and Turner.

Carlos Tejerizo García holds a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions-Individual Fellowship (H2020-MSCA-IF-2020/101032404) at the Università degli Studi di Genova. His principal line of research delves into the archaeological analyses of peasant societies in the long duration, being the archaeology of medieval peasantries one of the main focuses of research. He is now developing a project on the archaeology of peasant resistance and resilience in northwestern Iberia.

Eva Svensson is a historical archaeologist and professor in Environmental Sciences at Risk- and Environmental Studies, Karlstad University, Sweden. Svensson is an expert in socio-ecological and interdisciplinary approaches to forested landscapes in a long term perspective, and on the role of heritage and history in realizing Agenda 2030. Current research focus peasants' strategies and adaptations to risks and changing environmental conditions during the Late Medieval Agrarian Crisis.

Margarita Fernández Mier is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Oviedo (Spain). Her principal interest is the study of Early medieval societies in the north-western Iberia Peninsula, as well as the settlement analysis and the organization on agrarian landscapes. Current research focuses on common land and communities in the Middle Ages from an archaeology perspective.

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Preface

The series titled “Archaeology and History of the Peasantries. From the Late Prehistory to the European Common Agriculture policy” published in the collection “Documents of Medieval Archaeology” is one of the main results of the research project ‘Peasantry Agency and Sociopolitical Complexity in North-western Iberia in Medieval Ages’ funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness within the National Plan for R&D, as part of the Research Challenges in 2016. This project is part of a broader initiative consisting of four coordinated subprojects entitled ‘Local spaces and social complexity. The medieval roots of a 21st century problem’, which intends to understand the current rural communities in Southern Europe as heirs to a historical process of management and exploitation of local space dominated by the persistence of forms of collective organization in a permanent cooperative/conflict relationship with external actors of all kinds. One of the first axes in order to address this issue is, necessarily, to consider the genealogy of these historical subjects from a variety of approaches.

The main objective of this series is to explore the new theoretical and methodological approaches that characterize historical and archaeological studies of pre-industrial peasantries developed in recent years in the Iberian Peninsula and other European areas. This theme experienced a major boom throughout the twentieth century but has progressively declined in recent decades because of the theoretical renewal that characterized the postmodern turn, the fall of the Iron Curtain and, more generally, the progressive marginalization and disappearance of peasantry in favour of farmers embedded in a capitalist logic (RODRÍGUEZ BECERRA, MACÍAS SÁNCHEZ 2009). However, the emergence of a new archaeology of peasantries and rural areas, the recent renewal of social history in Europe and the profound consequences of the 2007-2008 financial crisis have created the conditions to question the validity and usefulness of this topic, and even this category of analysis. Increasing attention to cultural landscapes, processes of heritage of the rural environment, progressive erosion of collective identities through practices such as the registration of religious property or communal property appropriation and expropriation are some of the milestones that today characterize our capitalist society, culturally urban and generating forms of commodification, marginalization and subalternisation of societies and rural environment. Paradoxically, not only do peasants remain a majority on the planet, but their numerical entity has increased significantly in recent decades, particularly in Africa and Asia. In addition, some scholars have not hesitated to underline the relevance that the processes of “re-peasantification” of rural areas are having in Europe and the West (VAN DER PLOEG 2008) or the centrality that peasant cultures will have in the future in order to achieve forms of “sustainable development” in an era marked by the climate crisis (PÉREZ-VITORIA 2005).

Being aware of the complexity of such intellectual challenge and aiming to avoid the tendency to academic fragmentation with which Humanities address current societies challenges, on this occasion it has been decided that an innovative path in a triple direction should to be followed. First, a diachronic and long-lasting approach has been prioritized. Efforts to study peasants over different historical periods are not very frequent (ROSENER 1994; SCOTT 1998; TAUGER 2011), which makes it difficult to question the assumptions of each academic area or community. Secondly, there have been a diversity of researchers involved in a new new social history developing innovative theoretical and methodological proposals. Thirdly, although the focus of the project is located on the Iberian Peninsula, significant comparisons with other European territories under study have been made.

The first volume was centred, mainly, in the archaeology record of Iberian and other European peasantries (QUIRÓS CASTILLO 2020). This second volume of the series deals with peasantries from Prehistory to the Contemporary times from different angles and perspectives, focusing on theoretical and conceptual issues. Some of the chapters that make up this volume were presented at a scientific meeting held at the Faculty of Arts of the University of the Basque Country in Vitoria-Gasteiz in November 2019.

However, this is not the publication of the proceedings. Indeed, some papers have not been presented, and other relevant contributions have been included.

We must express our sincere thanks to all the people and institutions that have participated in the creation of this volume, starting with all the authors, the reviewers of the originals, the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Geography, Prehistory and Archaeology of the University of the Basque Country / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea.

Juan Antonio QUIRÓS CASTILLO

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