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Jeremy Hayhoe, *Strangers and Neighbours: Rural Migration in Eighteenth-Century Northern Burgundy*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2016. viii + 274 pp. Maps, tables, figure, notes, bibliography, and index. \$60.00 CAN. (cl). ISBN 9781442650480; \$60.00 CAN. (eb). ISBN 9781442623903.

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This book aims to bring quantitative rigour to the study of rural migration in eighteenth-century France. The author takes a region he knows well and constructs an elaborate methodology based on information derived from tax lists, witness statements to local seigneurial courts and commune-level census records dating from 1796 and 1872 in a bid to capture both short and long-range mobility between villages. The objective is to uncover the human reality of movement as it happened at the grassroots, and to measure its impact on the resources and power structures of receiving villages. But if this is in essence a case study rooted in one of the better-documented provinces of the *ancien régime*, it also marks out the contours of French rural history as many researchers currently perceive them.[1] Jeremy Hayhoe is anxious that we read his book as a challenge to the notion of '*histoire immobile*'. Although many nuances have been added to this thesis which was originally propounded by the historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie in 1973, it is probably true to say that the alternative vision of the hyperactive French village with people coming and going most of the time still troubles historians of the countryside.[2] Whilst the generalisation that France possessed a uniquely sedentary, semi-isolated rural population in the early modern period is rejected by specialists, many might jibe at the idea that inter-village 'micro-mobility', driven partly by the need to find marriage partners, amounted to a phenomenon that can usefully be labelled migration.

One of the many strengths of this study, however, is that it demonstrates that the mobility of villagers should not be confined to matters relating to family alliance strategy, or to seasonal movements in search of employment. The author's preliminary estimate is that each year one in twenty adults in rural north Burgundy changed their place of residence. But people, we learn, moved repeatedly, backwards and forwards and for irregular periods of time which makes necessary a 'life-cycle' interpretation of data that was intended only to provide a snap-shot. Once these and other factors are taken into account, Hayhoe presents his own snap-shot or profile of the north Burgundian village. Native-born villagers who never moved probably numbered 35 per cent of the population at the most. Typically, all the other inhabitants would have been non-natives, or migrants who had returned. Hence his conclusion that mobility and migration were by no means marginal features village life; they were ubiquitous.

Looking more closely at the data he is able to pick up certain recurrent practices and patterns of migration, noting along the way that they do not change much over time. For instance, young unmarried peasants or peasant-artisans in their twenties moved far more frequently than established tenant farmers; agricultural labourers often moved in order to exploit opportunities to become cottars; and some village occupations were semi-itinerant by their very nature (farm servants, lumber men, foresters, *colporteurs*, harvesters, beggars etc.) The extent to which these migratory practices took practitioners outside their 'mental' village and triggered an enduring shift in outlook is debated by historians. Yet this author detects

a distinct widening of cultural horizons between the 1750s and the 1780s – a finding that is supported by other sources which record the effects of road building, the introduction of cheap cotton fabrics and the spread of new field crops. In fact most of the findings of this study turn out to be corroborations of what we would expect, as Hayhoe acknowledges. Still, it is useful to know that the literacy of migrants seems to have been greatest among those who travelled furthest, and also that institutional factors weighed heavily in the balance when the decision to move was being taken. Burgundian villages subject to seigneurial *mainmorte* are shown to have been more sedentary in composition for the reason that mobility jeopardised the right to inherit from parents and *mainmorte* served to deter in-migrants as well. It seems likely that tax anomalies and variations in seigneurial harvest dues had similar effects.

These questions touch upon the impact of mobility or migration in host communities which the author declares to be the other main thread of his book. However, this theme plays second fiddle to the construction of the database and to the analysis of the flow patterns of rural migration. Only in chapter seven, “Regulating Migration: The Integration of New Inhabitants into the Rural Community,” do we learn much about the challenges which the arrival of impecunious migrants, or the departure of well-off native-born villagers could pose. This is a pity because ‘impact’ is an under-researched area, whereas the broad parameters of rural migration are now pretty well understood. Much of Hayhoe’s case study simply adds flesh to an already familiar story. More, for instance, could have been said about the fiscal implications of social mobility at the village level. Since taxation was levied collectively, it was almost inevitable that alterations to the social make-up of rural communities carried implications for established tax-payers inasmuch as most in-migrants would have been too poor to contribute very much. Yet the poor, whether sedentary or fleeting, were not slow in lodging claims to resources held in common (pasturing for stock, firewood, gleaning etc.) The question of access to communal resources raised in turn the issue of citizenship. Who exactly was considered to be a ‘*habitant*’ and how could this coveted status be acquired? The author finds a rough measure of integration in the holding of local office, which was usually denied to recent arrivals. Between 1758 and 1762 roughly two-thirds of those who occupied positions of trust in the rural communities of north Burgundy were either native-born residents or men who had married into the families of native-born females. However, villagers only trusted natives of long standing when appointing to the position of tax collector. This should not surprise for as the author notes the heads of migrant households rarely attended village assemblies.

One wonders how far this pattern of incessant mobility applies to the rest of early modern France. Jeremy Hayhoe is at pains to maintain a distinction between northern Burgundy (the modern Côte-d’Or department) and the southern part of the province which appears to have been less educated and less well integrated. He allows, too, that impartible inheritance practice combined with stem family structures tended to inhibit short-range migration. This is what we find in parts of southern France. In extreme cases a celibate life of toil in support of an elder brother, or seasonal expatriation, or, in the case of young women, the convent were the only prospects on offer for young, non-inheriting country dwellers. The Burgundian evidence does appear to have a wider applicability, though. According to this author, comparative analysis of the historiographical data on migration suggests that “northern Burgundian villagers had mobility patterns that very closely resembled those of ordinary rural people everywhere in north-western Europe (p. 61).”

NOTES

[1] For a flavour of the debates among rural historians, see Peter M. Jones, ‘Recent Work on French Rural History’, *The Historical Journal*, 46, 4 (2003), 953-61.

[2] See E. Le Roy Ladurie, ‘L’histoire immobile’ in E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le territoire de l’historien* (2 vols, Paris, 1975-8) translated as ‘history that stands still’ in E. Le Roy Ladurie, *The Mind and Method of the Historian* (Brighton, 1981), pp. 1-27.

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