

Association Notes

IN MEMORIAM

Frederic C. Lane
1900–1984

When this JOURNAL dedicated its issue of December 1980 to Frederic C. Lane on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, it had much to report about his activities since his retirement from The Johns Hopkins University fourteen years earlier. A bibliography accompanying the dedication brought his publishing record up-to-date since the 1966 volume of collected studies issued at the time of his retirement: it listed a book surveying Venetian history, the result of a lifetime of study (1973; Italian translation, 1978; German translation, 1980), fifteen additional articles, and another collection of earlier articles on protection rent and violence-controlling enterprises (1979). He had also received the 1980 International Galileo Galilei Prize, awarded annually to a non-Italian scholar for notable contributions to Italian culture and history. Clearly, Lane was enjoying a very busy retirement. The compiler of the bibliography noted that it was in fact merely an update; and indeed Lane continued to work on, right up to the very moment of his death, in October 1984. By that time the bibliography had grown to include yet another book, perhaps the most impressive of his career, and four more articles, not to mention two volumes of articles translated into Italian and a French translation of his history of Venice. In 1984 he was awarded the International Prize of the Francesco Saverio Nitti Foundation by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, an award of particular note since it was conferred by economists this time on a historian.

At the time of his death Lane had just begun the index to his last book, *Coins and Moneys of Account* (published by The Johns Hopkins University Press in the spring of 1985). This was the first of a two-volume study, *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, coauthored with his student, Reinhold C. Mueller of the University of Venice. The book is a masterpiece of empirical scholarship. Extraordinarily technical in its subject matter, massive in its research, wide-ranging in its pursuit of all ramifications, and always informed by theory, it could have been written only by a scholar who for a lifetime had been thinking about the subject and collecting material for it; and Lane was fortunate to have a collaborator of exceptional archival virtuosity. (The second volume, on the money market, will be almost entirely by Mueller.)

Lane, along with Gino Luzzatto, was the founder of the economic history of Venice; and his work more than that of any other scholar dominates the field. When he first went to Venice, in 1927, the bibliography on the history of the city included hardly anything that, properly speaking, could be called economic history. Given the nature of the proto-mercantilist government in Venice, much of the work of the institutionalist schools and what Croce called the economic-legal schools (as well as the traditional political historiography) naturally touched on the city's economic life, especially commercial and maritime activities. But the only specifically economic subject for which there was a body of scholarly literature was fiscal policy, including, above all, Luzzatto's contributions. Luzzatto, who was a full generation older than Lane, had himself turned to economic problems only in the late 1920s; and in fact in a 1932 article he criticized the historiographical situation for what he called the external study of economic activities. He was undoubtedly responding to the intellectual currents of the interwar years that gave rise to the first generation of economic historians dedicated to the study of early capitalism in Italy, including Armando Sapori and later Roberto Lopez in Italy, Yves Renouard and André-E. Sayous in France, and, in the United States, A. P. Usher,

Eugene H. Byrne, Robert L. Reynolds, Raymond de Roover, and Lane himself. Over the next decade Luzzatto pointed in the new direction with several articles on subjects of central importance to the Venetian economy—ship construction, business organization, banking, the bullion trade. Lane and Luzzatto became close friends and they shared precisely these interests, which Lane, in fact, was to make the subjects of a lifetime of research.

Lane was thoroughly trained in economic history. He was at Harvard when N.S.B. Gras was introducing the study of business history at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration; and his own mentor, A. P. Usher, was beginning to apply the methods of business history for the first time to banking in the medieval Mediterranean world. Lane dedicated virtually all of his research efforts exclusively to Venice, and his interest in economic life lay largely in three areas—the business organization of commerce, the fundamental relation of technology to economic activity, and workshop organization (including, in his later years, a keen interest in the economic lives of workers themselves).

None of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries working in Italian history, with the single exception of Sapori, had such a comprehensive view of what constituted the subject of economic history. Lane went right to the heart of the economic life of the city by taking up subjects like the construction of ships, the commerce in spices and bullion, the monetary system and the mint, business techniques for the conduct of international trade, and a host of secondary but related problems. Finally, since all these subjects led one way or another into government policy, Lane came to have extraordinary knowledge of the political world, and this always informed whatever specific economic activity he was examining. It was this political sense more than anything else that provided the larger context in which he always saw economic activity; Lane could never regard economics in a self-contained world that moved according to its own laws, following predetermined patterns of change. Significantly, his general survey of Venetian history was far from being an economic history alone.

It was significant, too, that he focused on Venice itself, the maritime republic at its height. Economic subjects farther afield or less central to the economic life of the state attracted his attention less. These younger historians have taken up, for the most part only in the last twenty years—for example, the routes of trade, the activities of pirates, the colonial empire abroad, and the mainland possessions with its subject cities and its agricultural economy. The last twenty years have also seen a flourishing of interest in the social aspects of economic life—demography, trades and crafts, law and justice, charitable institutions, general living conditions, the Jews—an orientation Lane himself came to share in his later years with his concerns about the lives of sailors and working conditions in the mint. Nor did Lane concentrate much research on the period of decline after the sixteenth century, another area where much work is now being done. Instead he concentrated on the city as a port, and he handled the big subjects so exhaustively as virtually to preclude further work. Banking was the one major activity he left largely untouched, and this subject is now being pursued by Reinhold C. Mueller.

In a very real sense the economic history of Venice began with Lane's work, and in a certain sense it also ends with his work: he did not so much open up new fields of research as establish the discipline solidly on the highlands, from which other scholars could begin the exploration of valleys and byways. None of the other great cities of medieval Italy—Florence, Genoa, Milan, Lucca, Siena—have found their economic history so securely in the grip of a single scholar.

Frederic C. Lane received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1930 and spent his entire academic career, from 1928 to 1966, at The Johns Hopkins University. He was editor of this *JOURNAL* from 1943 to 1951 and president of the Economic History Association in 1958 and of the International Economic History Association in 1965. In 1964 he was president of the American Historical Association. He was elected member in the

American Philosophical Society in 1955, honorary member of the Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Venezia in 1961, and fellow of the Medieval Academy and member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1964. A bibliography of his work appeared in the 1966 volume of collected studies, and this was updated in the 1980 issue of this JOURNAL dedicated to him. A complete bibliography will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Italian journal, *Ateneo veneto*.

RICHARD GOLDTHWAITE, *The Johns Hopkins University*

Simon Kuznets 1901–1985

Simon Kuznets, who was one of the founders of an empirical science of economics and of quantitative economic history, died July 9, 1985. He was the Nobel Laureate of 1971 and the Walker Medalist of 1977.

Kuznets was born in 1901 of a Jewish merchant family in Pinsk, then a Russian city.¹ He attended the Realschule and the University in Kharkov where the family had settled during the first World War. After two years in the University, he worked for a similar period in the Division of Statistics of the Central Soviet of Trade Unions, and it was there that he published his first article, "Money Wages of Factory Employees in Kharkov in 1920."²

Because the Polish-Soviet treaty of 1921 returned Pinsk to Polish sovereignty and because it established the right of persons born within the territory of the reconstituted country to return there, the Kuznets family was able to resettle in Poland. From there Simon, together with his older brother, Solomon, made his way to New York in 1922. The brothers were admitted to Columbia College with advanced standing, and there Simon gained the B.S. in 1923, the M.S. in 1924, and the Ph.D. in 1926.

Kuznets's dissertation on cyclical fluctuations in retail and wholesale trade was a brief but impressive study that led to his long-time connection with the National Bureau of Economic Research.³ The dissertation was prepared under Wesley Mitchell's supervision and was published in 1926 with a preface by Mitchell, who the next year brought Kuznets into the still young National Bureau. The Bureau remained Kuznets's research base until well into the 1950s. Here he did his famous work on national income and product and carried out a number of his early studies on economic growth.

Kuznets was Professor of Economics and Statistics at the University of Pennsylvania from 1930 to 1954. He then taught at Johns Hopkins from 1954 to 1960 and at Harvard from 1960 until his retirement in 1971.

Kuznets's first great line of work, on the national income and product accounts, began within a few years after he joined the National Bureau. The Bureau's very first

The author acknowledges with thanks the helpful suggestions of Abram Bergson, Paul David, Richard Easterlin, Solomon Fabricant, Victor Fuchs, and Donald McCloskey. Edith Handler Kuznets provided the information about Professor Kuznets's birthplace, education, and move to America.

The footnotes below give the documentation for the writings of Simon Kuznets that are cited here. A complete bibliography of his work until 1982 may be found in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 31 (Jan. 1983), pp. 433–54.

¹ Although many biographical articles and obituary notices give Kharkov as his birthplace, his widow, Edith Handler Kuznets, assures me that he was indeed born in Pinsk.

² In Russian, in Central Soviet Trade Unions, Southern Bureau, Division of Statistics, *Materials on Labor Statistics of Ukraine*, 2nd issue, Kharkov (July 1921).

³ Simon Kuznets, *Cyclical Fluctuations: Retail and Wholesale Trade, United States, 1919–1925* (New York, 1926).