

Els catalans a les Indies (1493–1830). By JOSEP M. BERNADES. 3 vols. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1991. Graphs. Tables. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Indexes. 1,230 pp. Paper.

Previous work on Catalans in the Indies, suggests Josep Bernades, reads like “Sunday supplement writing.” Amateurish, obsessed with historical trivia, and based on irrelevant, unrepresentative, or generally deficient evidence, it is largely beneath notice. Yet the Catalans themselves were, so to speak, present at the Creation. They participated in European as well as Castilian overseas expansion from the beginning. The absence of a documentary record in Catalan, the *silenci català*, Bernades (elsewhere also spelled Barnadas) explains, is understandable but irrelevant. The Indies were an essentially Castilian enterprise, at least from an institutional point of view. Sources in Castilian are thus readily available. So is a growing secondary literature. A history of the Catalan achievement is now necessary and possible.

Nevertheless, as Bernades freely admits, this work is a contribution to that history rather than the history itself. What Bernades provides is an account of 3,461 Catalan royal administrators, clerics, and “liberal professionals” who settled, sanctified, and governed the Indies and the Philippines between 1493 and 1830. He is not concerned with “colonists” (*colons*) per se, since, he says, they are treated in other studies. Consequently, some 24 percent of Bernades’ subjects are civil servants. Most of these were soldiers trained in schools of artillery and military engineering, such as the Acadèmia de Matemàtiques. The remainder were vice-roys, judges of the audiència, corregidores, and assorted functionaries. Another 67 percent of Bernades’ subjects were religious, members of the Augustinian, Franciscan, Dominican, or Capuchin regular orders or simply secular priests. For the rest, Bernades sketches out the lives and careers of a heterogeneous collection of physicians, artists, engineers, and the occasional settler. This group is oddly chosen, for some, such as Joan Aureli Casacoberta, born in Buenos Aires in 1798, were creoles of Catalan extraction or descent. Other Catalan legacies are similarly appropriated.

Bernades’ criteria of selection are language, birthplace, and, absent data on those, surname. Since Catalan was spoken in the Principat (including irredentist territories such as Roussillon, lost to France by the Treaty of the Pyrenees or, as Bernades prefers, “the Spanish deal of 1659”), in Valencia, and in Mallorca, natives of these once-privileged enclaves are considered Catalans. A majority of Bernades’ subjects, 53 percent, were from the Principat; another 37 percent came from Valencia. A scant 10 percent were from the Balearic Islands. Most, about 61 percent, came out to the Indies during the eighteenth century. Only 21 percent arrived between 1493 and 1700; 16 percent came between 1801 and 1830. The Nueva Planta of 1716 destroyed the Catalan state and its institutions, but nevertheless offered new opportunities to Catalans in church and royal service in the Indies. As

Bernades observes, Catalans were neither disinterested in nor excluded from the Indies; yet opportunities for them obviously widened after the War of Succession. Before 1700, high civil service positions in the Indies for those of Catalan birth were virtually unknown.

Bernades' Catalans could be found virtually everywhere in the Indies, but nearly 40 percent went to New Spain, New Granada, and Venezuela. A surprising 22 percent, mainly clergy, went to the Philippines. Bernades offers a number of additional cross-tabulations dealing with region of origin, chronology, occupation, social position, and destination.

For many readers, the first volume will be of greatest interest. Here Bernades presents an overview of his findings and lays out rules of selection and analysis. Helpful graphs and tables are included, although Bernades' discussions are lucid. Bernades includes a panorama of the people that interest him, and a chapter on the relations between the Catalans and "les Indies Castellanoespanyoles." The volume concludes with sketches of 36 "illustrious Catalans," including soldiers, savants, and religious. Whether all are equally accurate is impossible to say, but I checked a few carefully. One, a sketch of Joan de Miralles i Tailhon, commonly known as a "Spanish" agent in Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War, is both accurate and informative. Sketches of two viceroys of New Spain, Joaquim de Monserrat i de Cruilles and Fèlix Berenguer i de Marquina, are worthwhile. Of Berenguer, Bernades writes: "certainly he was not a brilliant viceroy"; of Cruilles: "he seems to have been overtaken by circumstances. . . ." (1:240). Fair enough. Yet Bernades' assessment of Juníper Serra i Ferrer as "one of the Catalans in the Indies of whom we can be most proud" will compel little assent from students of the California missions, although Bernades also admits that Serra could be "stubborn and a little irascible" (1:256).

The second and third volumes consist of scholarly apparatus. Volume 2 contains a bibliography of nearly six hundred items of "Americanist" literature involving Catalans in the widest sense. It includes a bibliography of the secondary sources from which Bernades worked, as well as works Bernades was unable to consult. The third volume, nearly six hundred pages long, is a "bibliographic register" of Catalans in the Indies. For each of the Catalans included in Bernades' study an entry supplies name and, if known, place and date of birth; destination in the Indies; career details; place and date of death; and relevant bibliography. The register is somewhat cumbersome, and its bibliography is vague. But it should provide scholars with a useful point of departure.

Research libraries will certainly want to purchase this set for their collections. Bernades' compilation may be idiosyncratic, but it will certainly prove useful to historians of many interests and persuasions.

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