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## Lazy, Improvident People : Myth and Reality in the Writing of Spanish History

By Ruth MacKay

Cornell University Press, United States, 2006. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 234 x 155 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Since the early modern era, historians and observers of Spain, both within the country and beyond it, have identified a peculiarly Spanish disdain for work, especially manual labor, and have seen it as a primary explanation for that nation's alleged failure to develop like the rest of Europe. In *Lazy, Improvident People*, the historian Ruth MacKay examines the origins of this deeply ingrained historical prejudice and cultural stereotype. MacKay finds these origins in the *ilustrados*, the Enlightenment intellectuals and reformers who rose to prominence in the late eighteenth century. To advance their own, patriotic project of rationalization and progress, they disparaged what had gone before. Relying in part on late medieval and early modern political treatises about vile and mechanical labor, they claimed that previous generations of Spaniards had been indolent and backward. Through a close reading of the archival record, MacKay shows that such treatises and dramatic literature in no way reflected the actual lives of early modern artisans, who were neither particularly slothful nor untalented. On the contrary, they behaved as citizens, and their work was seen...



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