

CRISTINA RODA ALCANTUD, *Historia e ingegneria en el siglo XIX. Vanguardia de la Industria naval en el Mediterraneo Occidental*. El Alsenal de Cartagena, Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena, 2008, pp. 390.

The context in which the subject of Cristina Roda Alcantud's wide-ranging research is set is studded with questions, some general and others more specific. The first big issue Alcantud deals with is the relationship between Spain's economic development and the more general process of the Industrial Revolution. As Juan Vilar notes in the book's Preface, the structural changes in Western Europe's economy began during a period of recession in Spain. However, it was, in fact, during this recession, as Alcantud declares right at the beginning of the book, that a radical transition was noted in the Spanish economy and in Spanish society, with the crucial change from its being a colonial empire to becoming a modern nation. It appears inevitable, therefore, that research should acknowledge a well-established historiography that has defined Spain a failure, the unequivocal signs of which are dependence on foreign capital and the loss of the colonies. Taking up Vicens Vives' studies, Alcantud observes that, rather than speaking of a failure, we should speak in terms of a lag, or rather a growth process which took place in Spain and which has turned it into the modern country it is today. Thus the state and infrastructure, factors typical of the development of a "latecomer" nation, were what stimulated the transformation of the Spanish economy. However, other factors were responsible too: changes in agriculture, which marked the abandonment of the feudal system in favour of the adoption of a capitalist system, although the capital accumulation process was slow; and the exploitation of mineral resources, not only in response to external forces, but also as a result of internal development. Three stages can be seen in this situation between 1830 and 1914: the first, between 1830 and 1850, marks the "take-off"; the second, between 1850 and 1880, when European development rates were attained; and the third, between 1880 and 1913, with protectionism and moderation in growth rates.

The history of the arsenal at Cartagena is among the general transformations that characterized the Spanish economy, especially from the point of view of relations with France and England, the main European powers. In particular, in the central decades of the nineteenth century, these relations tended to

accelerate changes in the shipyards. The importance of the sea in the growth processes resulted in Spain being defined as a typical case of industrialization in a Mediterranean region. And transport, especially maritime transport, was the core of Spain's modernization, with great recourse to foreign technology. However, in this case too, tradition played an important role, and was not in contrast to the structural changes taking place: in fact, the escalation in ship-building is inexplicable unless it is linked to the Golden Age in the eighteenth century. But it was not until the first Carlist war (1833-1839) that steam engines became more widespread, and not until the second half of the nineteenth century that metals were widely used in ship-building.

Cristina Roda Alcuntad goes on to examine the growth of the Spanish navy in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this case, the comparison with tradition is unavoidable: and, once again, the starting point, the defeat at Trafalgar, points to a state of manifest backwardness. But, as Alcuntad observes, on that occasion the Spanish navy suffered tremendous damage, but did not die. Reports that attempted to analyze the navy's condition portray a desolating picture of stagnation and corruption. The considerable political instability also contributed to the crisis with the high turnover of naval Ministers. From the middle of the century, to be precise from 1847 onwards, there was a gradual recovery: some measures, such as re-establishing the navy's Engineering Corps, marked a turning-point. The strategy followed was clearly defined: on the one hand, the nationalization of the production processes, and on the other, the training of personnel with sufficient knowledge for mastering the latest construction techniques. But this was not merely a purely material restoring of the navy's old influence; these were the years when, thanks to the efforts of the Minister, Molins, a national pride in the Spanish navy's mission came to the fore. The modernization of the armed forces must be linked with distinctly institutional aspects, which appeared in the mid-nineteenth century, when the army participated more actively in the life of the nation than in the past. As is often the case, such dynamism was the result of the weakness of the civil power, but was partially justified, too, by a more incisive foreign policy because of the geographical features of the Iberian peninsula. These were the years of the African War, when Spain obtained various Moroccan territories, but they were also years of great commitment to the colonies.

The reader thus arrives at the heart of the research: the need, due to the increased participation of the military, to modernise the arsenal, so that it not only became the city's most important enterprise, but also acquired a paradigmatic value in the context of the entire region's history. During the eighteenth century, the port and the escalation in maritime traffic were essential for servicing the Murcia countryside's agricultural produce. But the arsenal and the port were affected by the general political situation and so it was inevitable that, compared with the eighteenth century, the first decades of the nineteenth century were a period of crisis. And it was in this situation that the feature that was to remain constant throughout the nineteenth century emerged: the shipbuilding industry's dependence on military requirements. The crisis soon resulted in a ruinous situation, which seemed impossible to redress. Recovery was an extremely demanding task and was connected with the process of transforming and revitalising the navy. The year 1858 saw the beginning of a new stage in the reconstruction of the arsenal: after having perused the documents in detail, Alcantud states precisely the courses of action and the length of time involved in this radical restructuring, and links the restructuring not only to Spanish military developments but also to the vicissitudes of the city of Cartagena, to the extent that it took on the form of a *ciudad militar*. Thus the revitalization of the arsenal coincided with the revival of the city: when, during the Unionist phase, the O'Donnell government and the Minister, Molins developed a project to revive the arsenal, Cartagena was totally involved. The plan to revitalize infrastructures went beyond the port: in 1863, the Cartagena-Murcia railway was inaugurated with the aim of building a transport network reaching andalusia. Thus, during the nineteenth century it seemed inevitable that the arsenal and the city should share the same destiny, under the protection of the state.

The reader now reaches the most technical part of the research, which Cristina Roda Alcantud well supports with documentary evidence. The construction of the Santa Rosalia wharf, one of the most innovative works in the development of Spanish ports, became the emblem of the modernization of the Cartagena arsenal. Once again, studying the techniques used elsewhere was crucial: both Pennsylvania and the French navy were examined because the technical difficulties were enormous, as in the case when it was necessary to use an incline. There were also difficulties connected

with seepage in the ground on which the arsenal stood, and here too it was important to proceed, using what was already built with new features, that had already been tested in other European arsenals. Another big problem was finding low-cost labour on a large scale: this was partially solved by recruiting convicts. This is an old story, which in the nineteenth century triggered a new spate of literature justifying the use of this workforce, both from an economic and an ideological point of view. It led to a very high rate of mortality, and many prisoners tried in vain to escape from cruel working conditions, even though a distinction was made in the work the convicts had to do: of course, those who had committed the most heinous crimes had to do the heaviest work. On the whole, however, the generalized adoption of the steam engine in the mid-nineteenth century partially improved the workers' lot. It must, however, be specified that, although the case of the convicts was evident, the conditions of the regular workers – who were forced to work at the arsenal as the main employer in Cartagena and the surrounding areas – were not much better. An interesting analysis is made of the deployment of British labour at the arsenal. The British workers were often openly opposed to the local workforce, because they enjoyed better contractual conditions.

In practice, the engineers involved in adapting projects to the characteristics of the place had an important role. Firstly, Carlos Maria De Castro, and afterwards José Baldasano, were essential in ensuring the work was completed. Under the direction of Baldasano, who was responsible for the work from 1858, when the Unionist government was more determined that the arsenal should be modernized, the project underwent radical changes: the incline was converted horizontal to become, which involved many difficulties.

In conclusion, Cristina Roda Alcantud presents the reader with a composite picture of the changes that altered the face of Spain, reminding us of the need to consider the plurality of paths to economic development, as they took place in specific regional contexts.

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ANDREA CAFARELLI, *Il padrone non va per l'acqua. Assetti culturali e rapporti di produzione in un'azienda agraria della bassa friulana (1875-1914)*, Forum, Udine, 2011.

It is clear that enquiry into the history of agriculture in Italy has been gradually marginalized over the past few decades. No justification for this marginalization can be found in Italy's economic history. Even when agriculture is examined, it is tied to an industrial interpretation, almost as though agriculture finds its justification only when presented in a way that stresses the modernizing aspect brought by the advent of industrialization. This is an ideological approach, which ascribes a central position to aprioristic criteria and opinions and which have the sole task of confirming pre-established theories that are, often far-removed from the reality and complexity of historic processes. The researcher is almost justified in not studying archive sources, forming theories which are, for the most part, based on general but uncertain quantitative assessments, that at best leave him perplexed and doubtful about results.

Andrea Cafarelli's ideological approach is based on a totally different perspective. Cafarelli is firmly convinced that answers must be sought solely from the results of long, persistent research based on the study of documentation tracked down in archives, and referring back explicitly to an authoritative tradition of studies, which boasts, among its exponents, Rosario Romeo, Mario Romani, Emilio Sereni, Giorgio Giorgetti, Renato Zangheri, Luigi Del Pane and Carlo Poni (to mention but a few). He has obtained excellent results, which are very evident in the book featured in this review. In the fine introduction, he clearly states the approach from which he intends to draw his inspiration, rightly observing that only an in-depth examination of the documents, regarding the administration of private bodies and estates, can throw new light on a sector, which is still largely unexplored and which has received scant attention in recent Italian historical research. He also states that it is possible to make quantitative assessments in circumscribed cases, from which it is easy to deduce distinctly the data concerning estimates and comparisons, both diachronically and synchronously, without being lured by all-embracing analyses, whose basis is very difficult to prove. Here, too, Cafarelli puts himself in the wake of an authoritative research tradition – the reference to the exemplary studies on agrarian enterprises in the modern age by Domenico Sella and Aurelio Lepre

is more than sufficient – that still today is invaluable to our understanding of economic processes in certain periods of history.

And so, by means of a careful perusal of the documentation housed in the private archive of the estate belonging to the Micheli in Pocenia, together with the contribution of other important sources found in various state archives, a coherent new overall picture is reconstructed, which includes the attitudes, decisions and socio-economic ideas of the agricultural classes. From this point of view, the Michei family “constitutes a paradigmatic example of the agricultural bourgeoisie of the Friuli region”: although they were large landowners, they preferred “to stay out of the production process” (p. 15) and were content with preserving the *status quo*.

However, the countryside of the eastern Veneto region, where the Micheli's farm was situated, might be considered susceptible to progress. In fact, as may be inferred from the description Cafarelli provides in the first chapter, the Lower Friuli region is a flat area of some 70,000 hectares, made up of fertile land with a close-knit network of rivers, canals, rivulets and ditches, which often degenerate into marshes and swamps, with widespread effects. And, from being a potential ally, water itself became the main obstacle to the “new agriculture” and continued to be viewed thus for the entire period under review. It is not accidental that the less water there was in the territory, the more human settlements there were. The prevalence of arable land, woodland and vineyards confirms the picture of an agricultural system characterized by de-specialization, accompanied by the presence of grasslands, marshes and, even more significantly, woodlands. Climatic conditions, the nature and the degree of fertility of the land reinforced a situation that was, on the whole, positive and potentially suitable for an intense development of agricultural production.

In this context, the Micheli family's lands, which covered some 280 hectares, had features similar to medium-sized and large properties in the Veneto region in the nineteenth century, where land tended to be divided into plots. This agricultural trend underlines what has already been pointed out about the countryside of the Lower Friuli region: absence of the landowning families where the improvement of farm land and farming methods were concerned. This led to the tenants taking on a key role and a haphazard cultivation of several different crops as the main way of supporting themselves. Cafarelli stresses several constants of the farming community, which point to backward

agriculture based on self-consumption and immobility, a situation which could scarcely be changed by external aid, in particular from peripatetic teachers, pressing for the modernization of agriculture. The size factor – the fact that the farmlands were divided up into many small plots – counterbalanced by a high population density was the first big obstacle. Furthermore, there were also difficulties connected with the geographical location of these smallholdings, since they were often scattered over a large area, at some distance from one another. Cafarelli's research, however, attributes great importance to the way the farms were run, pointing out that this was the main element which curbed the area's development. Hence, he has carried out an exemplary in-depth reconstruction of the contracts, for which further evidence is provided by the perusal of abundant documentation, in which several common denominators may be found. Generally speaking, the running of the farms was based on two predominant contracts: mixed leases and sharecropping, which were often very similar. Rent consisted of a fixed quota of produce, among which wheat played a pivotal role, and a variable quota according to the fundamental criterion of land partition. Often these were verbal agreements, which only from 1875 began to be formalized by means of a notarial deed. The deeds were valid for a year, and were almost always tacitly renewed without resorting to new deeds. In fact, this led to stability among farming families, so much so that a deed lasted on average for more than 29 years. The part of the rent in cash covered the rent of the house and its outbuildings and the equivalent of the interest on the capital supplied, consisting of fertilizers, agricultural tools, seeds and fodder. On the whole, the cash quota amounted to between 20% and 30% of the total to be paid. Furthermore, the contract enjoined that the tenant should work gratis for the landowner for a certain number of days, an obligation which, in fact, the Micheli family hardly ever enforced. In this context, where medieval elements persisted in Italian agriculture after Unification, it was almost inevitable to meet many obstacles to land improvement and agricultural specialization. There was, however, a time of substantial change in contractual conditions: Cafarelli clearly identifies 1904 as the turning point "with a once and for all transition to a system of running the farms based on rent paid in cash" (p. 115). There are several reasons for this turnaround, but family reasons are of particular importance, in that on Antonio Micheli's death, his sons became sole heirs, and so the eldest son had to pay his two brothers

a considerable sum of money every year. Yet again, Cafarelli shows great caution in his research, not dwelling on external reasons, but clearly identifying an internal reason that heavily conditioned the estate's administrative decisions.

Inevitably, as far as products are concerned, most attention is paid to wheat. This is for two reasons: it satisfied the needs of home consumption and contributed decisively to paying the rent. Consequently, in the Micheli smallholdings, corn represented 60% of the gross marketable production, which resulted in a close connection between the price fluctuations of corn and the overall fortunes of the farm. Furthermore, a careful study of the account books shows how difficult it was for the bourgeois family to align the average account-book price with the selling price. This is seen in the agricultural crisis, during which "no significant decrease in production levels, no variations in agricultural structure and no changes in contractual relationships" were observed (p. 157). Maize had a different function, since it was used almost exclusively by the peasants for home-consumption, whereas, although vine-growing was widespread, so much so that wine was the most important surface product, vine-growing increased in quantity, despite the presence of cryptogamic diseases, mainly peronospora and vine disease, which jeopardized wine production. Here, too, Cafarelli believes that, rather than external causes, growth was stimulated by "a reevaluation of the role of viticulture in the estate's internal economy, and the peasants' increased autonomy, as far as agriculture was concerned, which stemmed from a substantial part of the rent being converted into cash" (p.165). Lastly, the mulberry bush was widely cultivated, but with varying degrees of success, since the leaves and the seeds were of poor quality, and the peasants did not tend the bushes well.

Finally, a rapid glance at the estate's accounts, which Cafarelli has reconstructed with a wealth of supporting evidence and data. Here again, there are several interesting aspects: Cafarelli underlines the fact that a poor, stagnant agriculture, such as that found in the Lower Friuli region, does not imply that the peasants' economic condition was in "a situation of irreversible endemic suffering" (p. 176). There were periods of substantial debt, but this was due to various causes, sometimes due to internal problems rather than to the general trend of economic cycles. The fact that, at a time of a huge fall in farming income because of a reduction in the prices of cereals, this was not reflected in an increase in rents and a change in the structure of agriculture is emblematic. In conclusion, we can see that there was an exact, constant separation of tasks

between the Michelis and the tenant-farmers: the Michelis desisted from asking for an increase in rent and from making bigger investments to improve crops and aimed instead to preserve the *status quo*, whereas the tenant-farmers paid the least possible, could not make investments and aspired to obtain the maximum from the lands' natural fertility. This led to a prolonged conflict between the two parties, but they presented a solid united front against any form of modernization and rationalization of the ways of running the estate. And so, agricultural improvements, which were widely debated on a theoretical level in a liberal Italy, met with tough opposition on the part of all classes involved in agriculture. And this is, perhaps, the clearest result of the research, which Caffarelli has carried out with great responsibility and commitment, and which shows the extent to which solidly documented analyses are not merely simplistic definitions, but can contribute to our knowledge about the real and complex economic processes of Italian history.

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MANUEL VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, *Il baco da seta in Umbria (XVIII-XX secolo). Produzione e commercio*, Editoriale scientifica, Naples, 2010.

It is common knowledge that in the last decades agricultural history studies have become fewer and fewer. This is a sad fact, not only because of the importance agriculture has had in Italy, but also because, in the past, generations of researchers have been formed studying the great themes connected with agriculture and have produced significant work, full of information about Italian economic history. In actual fact, there has been more interest in the subject of silk production, but it seems this was more because of its consequences on Italian economic development than for the subject in itself. Thus, once again, attention has been focused on the strong areas of Italy where, thanks to the decisive contribution of silk, primary capital accumulation was seen, whereas regions where this accumulation did not happen have been neglected or labelled with stereotyped judgements.

Piñeiro's book has the merit of throwing light on the function of silk production in Umbria, based on a wide-ranging and systematic perusal of documents found in several archives. Nowadays Umbria is to be considered one of the dynamic regions of Italy, but in the past centuries it underwent a long, complex "hatching" period. And, in fact, examining mulberry growing and silkworm breeding over two and a half centuries gives an undoubtedly interesting overall picture and shows how much monographs on so-called "lagging areas" can contribute to a deep, detailed knowledge of the course of Italy's economic history. It is worth underlining straightaway that this is anything but a mere local study: connections, comparisons and links with other areas appear frequently in the book, and make for inviting, easy reading. Thus the Umbrian countryside with its mulberry trees alongside elms, poplars, oaks and other trees is all part of the "agrarian-landscape of central Italy's diversified farm agriculture" (p. 38). And, in particular, on several occasions we find connections with Tuscany, where important trade routes were opened up, whereas relations with Latium slackened greatly over time, although pressure from the Papal State can be recognized in directives and decrees that were enacted from time to time.

Piñeiro, however, shows great common sense in pointing out that the cultivation of mulberry trees did not alter the region's basic agricultural structure, although there were areas where mulberry trees were more numerous, such as the countryside around Perugia, Todi and Corciano, especially in the mid-nineteenth century, just before the epizootic disease of the mid-1850s. There was one emblematic place that was closely connected with mulberry growing and silkworm breeding: this was St. Peter's Abbey in Perugia, where Piñeiro has examined the vast archive. St. Peter's was the first to grow mulberry bushes in the second half of the sixteenth century. However, although the basic trend was the presence of mulberry trees throughout the whole of Umbria, there were more mulberry trees on the plains, and fewer and fewer as the altitude increased. This situation remained unchanged until the 1930s, when silkworm production began to disappear rapidly, whereas there were still a goodly number of mulberry trees.

Consequently, mulberry growing attracted the attention of associations which closely followed developments in the Umbrian countryside "by means of a continuous correspondence with similar bodies in other Italian cities" (p.

57): Piñeiro analyzes these aspects in greater detail, dwelling on issues concerning silkworm breeding. Agricultural fairs acted as a stimulus in this sphere, although their action, as in many other areas of Italy, was limited and not very effective. Perhaps the most important aspect was to be found in the work of the peripatetic teachers, who taught the poorer peasants a basic knowledge of rural economy. This was to be seen in vine-growing and olive cultivation, too, as well as in mulberry growing.

The use of silkworm nurseries brought a qualitative leap in production, and revealed that knowledge circulated within the region and that the more enterprising of the agricultural classes in Umbria - for the most part identifiable in some aristocratic families - wanted to modernize agricultural practices. On the whole, however, these were exceptions: once again the presence of silkworm nurseries did not alter the traditional sharecroppers' houses, as they did in the Marche region, although this aspect did not penalize mulberry growing which, as Piñeiro notes frequently, prospered in sparsely-populated areas which were well-suited to small-scale production. But there was a turning point: as in other regions, in Umbria the spreading of pebrine posed the question of whether to put into practice the progress made in agronomic science. Consequently, at the end of the nineteenth century there was a dualism in production: on the one hand, the Terni Basin, dominated by the big factories, and, on the other hand, the area around Perugia, characterized by light industry, to which the silkworm farms contributed significantly. And, in general, a greater trend to silkworm breeding can be seen, in that breeders requested more precise information on the origin and the quality of the seeds. I have noted similar processes during my research on the propagation of vine pest in the vineyards of southern Italy.

An examination of the marketing levels follows, regarding both the procuring of raw material and the search for markets for the product. Piñeiro observes that there was a network "of commercial channels ascribable to a generalized and, for obvious reasons, evasive itinerant intermediation" (p. 119). It is, therefore, difficult to reconstruct an exact quantitative picture, despite the fact that some basic trends can be outlined clearly. Expansion spread until the end of the eighteenth century, and was followed by a paralysis at the beginning of the nineteenth century. When trading recovered in the 1830s, the lack of an official market with definite rules was felt in Perugia. Moreover, these were the years when two customs policies clashed - that of Tuscany and that of the

Papal States – and it was in this difficult situation that links with the Grand Duchy grew stronger.

Several parties therefore felt the need – as in many places in Italy – to set up official markets. Perugia was the first place to do so, although the market did not have permanent premises. In the wake of Perugia, new markets were gradually opened in Foligno, Terni and Città di Castello, and existed alongside diverse flourishing unofficial markets. At the end of the nineteenth century, various voices were raised against the official cocoon markets, which were considered obsolete and ineffective for the demands of trading cocoons. Regulations were amended several times without achieving the desired results. Piñeiro's detailed analysis enables the reader to detect that commercial relations took off with the spread of pebrine in the mid-nineteenth century in northern Italy; prices thus tended to rise significantly, in an evident opposing trend to the national trend. Although not consistently, the number of cocoons sold on the market at Perugia became significant. There was an upward trend, which was reinforced at the beginning of the twentieth century, and which, after the paralysis caused by World War I, recovered until it was suddenly halted in the 1930s: this too was a trend in line with the more overall development process of Italian silkworm breeding. The last chapter of the book deals with the price trend. Here again, some basic trends are discussed, which, on the whole, are in line with the trend of production and the volume of trade on the markets. And, once again, the markets played a prominent role, not only in catalyzing production, but in fixing prices.

These are merely a few aspects – with no claim to be exhaustive – highlighted in a scholarly work, based on documents found in various archives. Although the book is strongly anchored to a specific but significant territory, it never neglects the overall general development picture. Thus, as Alberto Grohmann observes in the Preface, Piñeiro's research "considerably revises the idea of the Umbrian agrarian economy's underdevelopment and isolation, which historians had handed down to us, because, although it did not ignore Umbrian silkworm production, it had undervalued its significance and its capacity to break up old equilibriums " (p. 13). This is an opinion to be shared without a moment's hesitation, and one which bears witness to the extent to which the history of Italian agriculture is still awaiting documented, clear studies like the book that has just been reviewed, and which, like every good book,

poses questions and problems worth considering and analyzing in future research.

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RONALD RICHTER, *Garibaldi's "Zug der Tausend" in der Darstellung der deutschen Presse*, Frankfurt-am-Main, Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 162.

This book deals with how the German press perceived the Italian Risorgimento, especially the Expedition of the One Thousand, led by Garibaldi (10 May - 6 November 1860), which caused the fall of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and, together with the intervention on the part of the kingdom of Sardinia, resulted in the unification of Italy. The book concentrates on three specific German periodicals of the time: the monthly review with liberal leanings *Preussische Jahrbücher*, the pro-Austrian newspaper *Allgemeine Zeitung*, and the ultra-conservative Prussian newspaper *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, also known as *Kreuzzeitung*, literally the Newspaper of the Cross, because the front page carried a reproduction of the iron cross, one of the symbols of the wars of liberation fought in the German area against Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In his analysis of the articles, Richter has concentrated first of all on the attitude of each periodical towards the entire Risorgimento process, which culminated in spring 1860, but he has also examined the reports of the revolts in Sicily in April 1860, the Expedition of the One Thousand and Giuseppe Garibaldi, how the Bourbon dynasty behaved, the reports regarding the kingdom of Sardinia's military intervention in central and southern Italy, and the first months of the Piedmontese provisional government in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Lastly, in his conclusions, the results of his analysis of the three periodicals are brought together.

In general, the *Preussische Jahrbücher* seemed in favour of the Risorgimento process and of the founding of an Italian national state under the leadership of the kingdom of Sardinia, which the review's authors and correspondents

regarded as a sort of Italian Prussia. The *Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, on the contrary, openly despised the Italians' efforts to found a single state. All three periodicals were highly critical of Giuseppe Mazzini, considered the emblem of democratic republicanism, of the Emperor Napoleon III, and of political and military collaboration between the kingdom of Sardinia and France, in which they saw only a danger for peace in Europe and for the post-Napoleonic order created at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

For this reason, the three periodicals criticize the Sardinian-Piedmontese government's decision to hand over Savoy and the County of Nice to France so that the kingdom of Sardinia might obtain Napoleon III's approval of the annexation of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchies of Parma and Modena, and the Papal Romagna; this was a political decision on the part of the Sardinian-Piedmontese government, and was considered a betrayal of the inhabitants of Savoy and the County of Nice.

In favour of the founding of a national state under the leadership of the kingdom of Sardinia, the *Preussische Jahrbücher* made no secret of its benevolence in reporting the conquest of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies by Garibaldi and his volunteers. Although against the Risorgimento process, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* never criticizes Garibaldi's military expedition and his military successes, because the newspaper's authors were well aware of the fact that everything that was happening in the South was a consequence of the repressive, intransigent politics of the Bourbon regime, whose legitimacy, paradoxically, was never openly questioned. This attitude changed, however, when the Piedmontese decided to intervene in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and did not respect the territorial integrity of Pius IX's Papal States: the newspaper's correspondents were quick to criticize the Turin government's decision as a violation of international law and an act of usurpation on the part of Victor Emanuel II towards the legitimate king of the Two Sicilies, Francis II. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, on the other hand, which was openly legitimist, strongly criticized both Garibaldi's expedition and the kingdom of Sardinia's military intervention, which, like the *Augsberger Allgemeine*, it viewed as an undoubtedly illegitimate action.

As far as the Bourbon dynasty and the figure of Francis II is concerned, the *Preussische Jahrbücher's* opinion was totally negative. The authors of the review's articles were openly critical of the young king, in whom they saw a

weak monarch, not equal to his tasks, who paid for the repressive politics of his predecessors, and especially of his father, Ferdinand II. The other two newspapers were of a different opinion: they pitied the fate of the young sovereign who had recently ascended the throne of the Two Sicilies and had been overwhelmed by the very grave crisis. However, unlike the *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* made no secret of the fact that Bourbon politics, too, was responsible for this crisis, especially concerning the causes of the regime's rapid collapse in Sicily. On the other hand, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* denied any responsibility on the part of the dynasty for the crisis in course: it was all due to the alliance between the kingdom of Sardinia and the France of Napoleon III, who, it was believed, had been aiming to overthrow the Bourbon regime for a long time.

As far as the Neapolitan army's repeated failures in combating Garibaldi's troops are concerned, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* attributed most of the responsibility to the commanding officers of Francis II's army, not to the king himself, and sympathy for the young sovereign's fate grew considerably when he decided to put up a fierce resistance to Garibaldi's troops and then to the Piedmontese army in the fortress at Gaeta which remained in the hands of the Bourbon army until 13 February 1861. In their reports on the situation at Gaeta, which was besieged by the Piedmontese army, both the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* and the *Allgemeine Zeitung* praised the special commitment (diligence) of Francis II's wife, Princess Maria Sophie von Wittelsbach, which was obviously due also to her belonging to a German dynasty.

The attitude the three periodicals took in their perceiving of Italian political and military events of 1860 continues to be seen in the reports and articles on the first months of Piedmontese government in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The articles concentrate at first on the anarchy caused by the Bourbon regime's collapse and on the open hostility on the part of some of the population of southern Italy towards the new government. Then they deal again with the siege of the fortress at Gaeta and the so-called "brigands" i.e. the pro-Bourbon rebels, who begin to organize themselves into bands. The *Preussische Jahrbücher* demanded of the Piedmontese government prosecutions without pardon so that the rebels may be defeated and no longer endanger the stabilization of the new political order. The *Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, on the contrary, saw in the rebellions a very clear signal

of the discontent and disappointment of a large part of the population with the former Bourbon kingdom.

Indeed, a recurring theme in the articles of the periodicals not in favour of the unified state founded by the Savoy dynasty was, without doubt, the brigandage which had developed in the mainland area of the former kingdom of the Two Sicilies: its repression lasted until the end of the sixties, with at least 130,000 dead, many more than those recorded in the entire Risorgimento. The German press in favour of the unified state was optimistic about the stabilization of the new political order in the Italian peninsula, despite all the internal problems that very soon arose in the newborn kingdom of Italy. It is, however, interesting to note, as Richter observes in conclusion, that after the birth of Germany as a national state in 1871, even those periodicals that had expressed admiration for Italy's rapid political unification, compared to Germany (where nothing seemed to be happening), became less enthusiastic and, considering Italy's internal problems, proclaimed that the German unification process had succeeded much better than the Italian one.

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MIGUEL ÁNGEL GARCÍA SÁEZ AND PABLO DÍAZ MORIÁN, *El puerto del acero. Historia de la siderurgia de Sagunto, 1900-1984*, Marcial Pons, Madrid, 2009.

The development of heavy industry has traditionally been considered one of the hallmarks of the Industrial Revolution. Whereas in countries such as Great Britain and, later, Belgium, Germany and the USA, heavy industry flourished famously during the nineteenth century, facilitated by the existence of rich coal and iron ore deposits, its development in Spain was hampered by the country's limited resources of good-quality coal.

It should, however, be noted that such constraints did not prevent the growth of an important iron and steel industry from the late 1860s in some areas of northern Spain, such as the Asturias and the Basque Country, and neither did it prevent a talented Basque entrepreneur, Ramón de la Sota, from

opening a modern iron and steel plant at Sagunto on the Spanish Levantine coast at the beginning of the twentieth century. The history of this plant is analyzed in this book by Sáez García and Díaz Morlán.

Nowadays, the Spanish Mediterranean coast is mainly known for its dynamic tourist industry and as a world tourist destination, and so it might be surprising to discover that, a century ago, someone had chosen this area as a site for an iron and steel plant. This is one of the many fascinating issues discussed in this volume.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part analyzes the origins of this ambitious project. In 1900 Ramón de la Sota founded the Sierra Menera Mining Company, whose objective was to export to European markets iron ore from the Ojos Negros and Setiles mines, in the provinces of Guadalajara and Teruel. These mines were about 200 kilometres inland from the Mediterranean coast, and this prompted de la Sota to build a railway line stretching all the way to Sagunto. There are many reasons for thinking that de la Sota bit off more than he could chew and that his whole project was seriously flawed from the very beginning. The development of the railway line was expensive and the effects of this on the financial stability of the company were combined with the low quality of the Setiles and Ojos Negros iron ore, and with the problems brought by World War I, which hindered iron-ore exports to European markets. With the aim of solving these difficulties, in 1916, de la Sota decided to move one step forward, creating an iron and steel plant in Sagunto, the *Compañía Siderúrgica del Mediterráneo*. Since de la Sota already owned an important shipping company and had also founded a shipyard in Bilbao, it is easy to understand the objectives behind the forming of the new company: in return for the Sierra Menera iron ore, which he exported to England in his own ships, de la Sota hoped to obtain good-quality British coal for his new plant, whose prospects were reinforced by the fact that he also wanted to sell the steel produced at Sagunto, both on the European and the Spanish markets. Yet, once again, de la Sota must have been very disappointed because, after a relatively successful initial phase, the difficulties caused by the Great Depression and by the Spanish Civil War thwarted the whole project and led to a new phase in the history of the Sagunto plant, which is analyzed in part two of the book.

In 1940 the *Compañía Siderúrgica del Mediterráneo* was taken over by Altos Hornos de Vizcaya. Altos Hornos was the main Spanish producer of iron

and steel, owning the important plants in Baracaldo and Sestao, near Bilbao, and during the following three decades the group's clear preference for the development of its Basque factories relegated the Sagunto plant, to a secondary role. This could have been considered the death knell for Ramón de la Sota's idea of creating a powerful iron and steel industry on the Spanish Levantine coast, an idea he first had at the beginning of the century. However, as the authors convincingly explain in parts 3 and 4, the changes brought to worldwide iron and steel markets by the growth of the global economy after World War II offered a new and rather unexpected opportunity for the Sagunto plant, which may be best understood by taking three aspects into account.

Firstly, after 1945 there had been a continuous increase in the global demand for iron and steel. The Spanish economy joined this trend in the 1950s and, as everywhere else, about 1970 there was widespread agreement about the sector's promising prospects. Of course, no one could have predicted then that such expectations would prove wrong after the 1973 oil crisis, but the point here is that, at the beginning of the 1970s, both the Spanish authorities and the country's private companies were convinced of the advantage of massive investments in the sector to increase iron and steel production.

Secondly, it should be remembered that, after 1945, there had been substantial changes in the rules, which had guided the development of the iron and steel industries since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Until then, one of the basic rules had stressed the necessity to build iron and steel factories near the sources of the supply of coal and iron ore, but this principle lost weight as a result of the advances in maritime transport after World War II, which explains why the most advanced plants of the period tended to be located on coastal sites. This trend gave the Sagunto plant a clear advantage, reinforced by the fact that the traditional Asturian (Ensidesa) and Basque (Altos Hornos de Vizcaya) plants were situated at some distance inland, in the midst of densely-populated areas, which hindered any plan of modernization, as far as both these plants were concerned.

This was not the only problem of the plants of northern Spain, because it should also be considered, thirdly and lastly, that they were specialized in products whose demand was showing unmistakable signs of stagnation. During the last decades of the century, the car industry became one of the most dynamic markets for steel, and the Spanish economy had to face the challenge to improve its

methods in order to meet the increasing needs of the country's car industry. As result of the traditional production methods prevailing in Altos Hornos de Vizcaya and Ensidesa, the Spanish economy had to import every year a considerable amount of intermediate products to supply its car factories with sufficient good-quality steel. Of course, adopting new methods was the best way of solving this problem, although this had the additional disadvantage that such improvements threatened the traditional hegemony of the Basque and Asturian plants, because, once again, the factory best suited to the new methods was Sagunto.

When these three factors are considered it is well-nigh impossible not to agree with the authors: between 1970 and 1980 the Spanish iron and steel industry had arrived at a watershed. It seemed obvious that the modernization of the whole sector involved the development of the Sagunto plant, whose steel could supply the nearby car factories of Valencia, Barcelona and Saragossa, especially since, at the same time, the traditional northern factories were obsolete and in decline, and in fact some steps were taken in this direction, such as the project of building a brand-new factory at Sagunto (the famous IV Planta de Siderurgia Integral).

But those projects were destined to fail for two reasons, according to Díaz Morlán and Saéz García.

Firstly, metal industries had traditionally been a key part of the social and economic fabric of the Asturias and, in particular, Biscay, so any project to develop the until-then ailing Sagunto plant was certain to arouse strong opposition among the powerful economic and political forces of both provinces. Secondly, the effects of this opposition were reinforced, perhaps decisively, by the peculiar circumstances created by the negotiations between the Spanish government and the European authorities.

During the 1970s the negotiation process, which led to Spain's entry into the European Common Market, reached its final phase. The consolidation of the new, modern steel plant of Sagunto would have endangered the French exports of intermediate steel to Spain, so the failure of the project of the IV Planta de Siderurgia Integral may be also considered as part of the price the Spanish socialist government of the time was ready to pay for Spanish admission into the European Common Market.

Many books promise more than what they really offer. Fortunately, this is not the case in this book, which is much more than a narrowly-focused study

of a relatively unknown Spanish iron and steel plant on the Mediterranean coast. Thanks to the careful analysis carried out by the authors, the reader may reach an overall understanding of the main features of the history of the Spanish iron and steel industry in the last century.

The last two sections of the book are particularly interesting. There is the temptation of seeing in the crisis of the traditional Spanish iron and steel industry during the last decades of the twentieth century the almost unavoidable result of the changes the sector experienced after World War II. Of course, such a view contains more than a kernel of truth, so it should not be dismissed. However, as the authors show convincingly, there are also other aspects, which deserve to be considered. It is certain that, in the last third of the twentieth century, the prospects of the traditional northern plants were bleak, although this does not mean that the whole Spanish iron and steel industry was doomed to disappear. In fact, the sound evidence provided by the authors suggests that, during this period, a good opportunity for the development of an advanced steel sector oriented to satisfying the needs of the Spanish motor industry had arisen in Sagunto. This chance was missed in the end because, as the authors clearly prove, there were complex internal pressures from the traditional plants and the situation was aggravated by the Spanish government's fear of endangering the negotiations for Spanish entry into the European Common Market.

In conclusion, this book is a great help to all those interested in Spanish economic and social history in the last century and the reader obtains a sound view of the history of the Spanish iron and steel sector and, in particular, of the complexities surrounding the processes of industrial change in the last decades. Obviously, the success or failure of such processes is heavily determined by economic factors, yet this should not hide the fact that, more often than not, political and social factors exert an influence which must be taken into account. Although it may be difficult to include those elements in the most widely-used mathematical models of economic growth and in the books of economic theory, their importance is beyond question, and the history analyzed by Sáez García and Díaz Morlán in *El Puerto de Sagunto* deserves to be considered as convincing proof.

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PIETRO TINO, *Le radici della vita. Storia della fertilità della terra nel Mezzogiorno (secoli XIX-XX)*, XL edizioni Sas, Rome, 2010.

Over the course of time, research into the history of agriculture has become increasingly rare, and has been identified as a field where an updated scientific approach is not necessary. As regards an ideological view of historical processes, agriculture has been gradually marginalized, in the firm belief that the basic features are by now well-known, almost as though the impetus that could come from new research had worn itself out. Moreover, agriculture seems to have nothing to say about the present, its equilibriums and its crises, which are almost always interpreted as, and traced back to, problems of an industrial and financial nature. Ample proof of this is seen in school and university text-books, which devote very little space to important changes in agriculture and which, for the most part deal with the contemporary era, almost as though the past centuries did not count. And the notable reduction in the number of chairs of the history of agriculture in Italian universities is a worrying confirmation. It might be said that agriculture is one of the famous victims of the modernization process, without it being understood that the modernization process was given a boost by the radical changes in agriculture, which led to the first phase of capital accumulation on which the theory of economic development was devised.

This view is widespread among specialists, and has even more negative consequences, as far as public opinion is concerned. In fact, there is a basic ignorance of the vital contribution the fruits of the earth continue to provide for human subsistence : we need only think of what is happening in various African countries, of the dramatic wars and humanitarian crises that arise when there are food shortages; the Horn of Africa is now living through such a tragedy. The affluent areas of the planet seem exempt from such worries, but they awaken from their torpor whenever there is a sudden rise in the prices of staple commodities. Generally, however, discussion takes place about stereotypes, with the aggravating circumstance that, when agricultural issues are considered, the picture is even more obscured by prejudices and factiousness, as well as by an increasingly widespread ignorance about agriculture's techniques and production methods.

Pietro Tino's book is in marked contrast to this present trend. A scholar who, for many years, has concentrated on research into agricultural studies,

he does not resign himself to subordinating the primary sector to other sectors of the economy; on the contrary, in the title of the book he reminds the reader that agriculture is to be traced back to the origins of life. And therefore, if agricultural production is so crucial to deciding a society's economic, social and cultural system, it is inevitable that, since it is such a serious subject, it can be approached only scientifically. And the subject of soils and the fertility of the land are clearly important subjects for new lines of scientific enquiry, as Piero Bevilacqua stresses in his preface to the book, compared to those carried out in the twentieth century, because it is now obvious "that land husbandry has been transformed through an immense transfer of energy" (p.9). Consequently, in industrial agriculture, the subject of productivity has taken the place of that of fertility, with extensive plundering of energy and fossil material from the subsoil. This has resulted in a marked impoverishment of the soil and its degree of fertility, which can cause damage that is often irreversible.

Tino chooses southern Italy as his territory of reference. This is a brave decision, bearing in mind that, in the past, the southern regions have been the focus of important research, whereas nowadays historical studies appear to neglect them. Referring to agriculture in southern Italy, Tino points out the crucial transition which took place over the past two centuries, from traditional practices and knowledge, mostly handed down orally from one generation to the next, to the establishing of industrial agriculture based on chemical fertilizers.

In describing such a crucial transformation, Tino emphasizes various elements that, in my opinion, are interesting. Firstly, the analysis reveals that the cultivation of fodder was "almost unknown" in southern Italy in the nineteenth century, and indeed later. However, there were methods that were anything but backward and homogeneous. An examination of the area around Naples reveals that "restoring fertility to the soil involved methods, a degree of concentration and levels of expertise unknown elsewhere" (p. 29). And this was due primarily to the population pressure, which has been a feature of this area for hundreds of years. Tino's research, showing the connection between the intensive forms of agricultural economy tied to the salvage of urban waste and Naples' consumption requirements, is significant, and leads to some considerations on the present-day situation, especially on Naples' inability to solve the worrying garbage issue. Vastly different fertilization systems were to

be found in the other regions of southern Italy, where cereals were the main crop, although arboreal cultivation was increasing. Here, leaving land fallow periodically was the most widespread practice (p.37), to which others were complementary, such as the practice of *debbio*, which consisted of burning stubble, shrubs and scrub found on the land to be cultivated. These were fragile systems that struggled to cope with the population pressure, which remained considerable, despite being partially alleviated by the "safety valve" of emigration. The phenomenon of soil impoverishment was not unknown, and most of the nineteenth century saw a constant decline in production. However, this did not depend only on the southern Italian peasants' lack of aptitude for undertaking changes, which could preserve the lands' fertility; environmental difficulties played an important part, and attempts were made to overcome these by gradually planting more trees, which required less organic manure, and were more resistant during long periods of drought. Although, in my opinion, overseas demand, which was increasingly linked to supply in southern Italian agricultural markets, was determinant in stimulating growth, which in some periods reached particularly frenzied levels.

In any case, the system was unable to sustain the new demographic pressure between the two World Wars, which was made worse by the imposition of migration quotas, and this pressure became more intense after World War II. In this situation the use of mineral fertilizers in the southern Italian countryside was restricted, while the soil condition was deteriorating considerably, in particular, because of the Fascist regime's decision to implement a policy of cereal cultivation in southern Italy. Once again, however, Tino carefully avoids generalizations in his research, pointing out that, in the area between the land around Caserta and Naples and the land north of Salerno, chemical fertilizers and crops that "improved" the soil were more widely used.

The second half of the twentieth century was a turning point: chemical fertilizers became more widespread, supported by important infrastructure development, which reduced marketing costs. Furthermore, the increased use of chemical fertilizers became feverish in Apulia, whereas their use in the coastal areas of Campania became more widespread as time went by. On the whole, it was a process that was anything but painless, "a process consisting of a radical transformation of agriculture, which was relatively rapid and at times violent, but which has modified agriculture's often age-old economic,

socio-demographical and cultural features" (pp. 91-92). The flight from the countryside, the decline of cultivated land, the revival of the land reclamation schemes, increased irrigation, an expansion in industrial crops, the introduction of agricultural technology, and the increasing use of plant protection products all radically redesigned southern Italy's agricultural structure. And so, in the second half of the twentieth century, the much-desired agricultural modernization process took place in southern Italy. In other words, in a simplistic interpretation, we might conclude that everything had been resolved for the best. But was this really the case? Tino is in evident disagreement with this optimistic view and, in the last part of the book, he highlights the critical state of agriculture in recent decades in much of southern Italy. These are pages which make the reader reflect, as they show that only documented research taking a long-term perspective throws light onto processes that are hastily believed to be mostly positive, because they are capable of satisfying the population's consumption requirements. And this is, itself, a valid argument to justify resuming scientific research into the history of agriculture. The hope is that this period of oblivion will soon be set aside, and that there may soon be a revival of research into the primary sector, which, as is well-known, has influenced one of the most fertile and farsighted generations of historians that Europe has ever seen.

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