

B. BLANCHETON, *Histoire de la Mondialisation*, De Boeck ed., Collana Une Point Sur, Brussels, 2008, pp. 152.

The contemporary era is witnessing an exponential intensification of the economic and financial opening-up of areas worldwide. This phenomenon interacts causatively with other variables, such as the development of information and communication technologies and the founding of supranational institutions. Such increasing interdependence explains the dynamics that have contributed to the spreading of today's international crisis. Blancheton's historical approach aims to put globalization (*mondialisation*) into perspective in order to identify its elements of change and continuity, as well as its driving forces and its influence on growth and development.

Histoire de la Mondialisation has a clear analytical structure, which is defined at the beginning of the book: the period (from the Industrial Revolution onwards), the areas of reference (commercial and financial) and the method adopted (quantitative). Likewise, the terminological categories which describe the *mondialisation* phenomenon are defined, with the aim of clarifying the terminology associated with it, such as "economy world" and "cyber-world". Different meanings are associated with these concepts, and they describe the present-day centrality of interdependence and global trading: *mondialisation* signifies putting into practice the process of communication and interconnection between economic, financial and social worlds, whereas "globalization" corresponds to a concept of cultural standardization that follows on after interconnection and the intensification of trade; "integration" refers to convergence of an economic nature, while "internationalization" is related to the process of opening up among individual nations which, however, are viewed as organizations that are in decline from the *mondialisation* point of view. Lastly the term "opening" indicates merely the inclination to change, which is not necessarily a national change, in contrast to autarchy.¹

¹ In this sense the term might also refer also to cultural openness, as in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. On this subject Bertrand Blancheton quotes the famous phrase of the Chinese Communist Party Secretary Deng Xiaoping: "There is not a single country in the world, no matter what its political system, that has managed to modernize itself with a policy of closed doors" (1982). Cit. p.7.

The historical overview at the beginning of the book describes the stages of *mondialisation* which, according to Blancheton, has taken place in different forms throughout the history of mankind and therefore it is impossible to give it an exact starting date; it is, however, possible to describe the varying degrees of intensity the process has had over the centuries. Its "peaceful historical debut" had its roots in ancient times and in the Middle Ages, becoming the "spirit of the world" after the discovery of the Americas until the Industrial Revolution in England, which decreed the worldwide division of labour and, consequently, the internationalization of trade. The beginning of global economic interdependence created the conditions for the first world crises (the Anglo-American shock of the 1820s and the 1830s, the American Civil War's repercussions on cotton prices worldwide, and the crisis in Argentina in 1890), and, at the same time, internationalization turned into migration flows and capital flows. The rise of financial *mondialisation* thus began to interact with the real economy on the flow of consumer goods. This historical period was marked by the economic and commercial hegemony of Europe; however, European dependence on vital supplies from abroad led to serious consequences after the two World Wars. A key point of this historical analysis lies in the centrality of the "spirit of capitalism" on which *mondialisation* is based. It then overtook capitalism, broadening the role and opportunities for the individual and for operators as they carried out their own economic activities. The protectionist tendency following the 1929 crisis constituted a sharp break with this historical process. Although the national protectionist policies to re-launch the economies erased the progress that had been reached in the previous half-century, their failure did lead to the adoption of a new policy of openness after World War II. Thus, it may be said that there have been two major *mondialisation* processes in the contemporary era – one before the First World War and the other after 1945 – and that their comparative assessment is still today a subject of study and debate.

The commercial perspective, dealt with in the first part of the book, is the most important part of the *mondialisation* process, especially in a historical perspective, because in a neo-classical setting the exchange of production factors may cause national economies to converge (Heckscher Ohlin, Samuelson). A discussion of the principal theories on the relationship between commercial openness and economic growth is followed by an analysis of the

market conditions in which the adoption of protectionist strategies is justified historically, for example to defend rising industries, quoted in the *Report on Manufactures* presented to the United States Congress on 5 December 1791 by the first American Treasury Secretary, Hamilton, and revised by Friedrich List in his book *Das nationale System der politischen Oekonomie* (1841). Blancheton stresses that, following the commercial stagnation of the 1930s, there was a debate that set protectionism and free trade in opposition to one another. "The spectre of a revival of autarchy flourishes again, and condemns it on principle" (p.28). On this subject, Blancheton focuses on a point that is crucial for a correct interpretation of *mondialisation*, in other words the historical self-promotion of protectionism. Although nowadays protectionism is the exception, historically protectionist policies, which were often aggressive, had been the norm. We must therefore take into account the gradual nature of historical processes, and the distinction between autarchy and the historical role of protectionism. Blancheton argues that the cyclical return to protectionist remedies should be interpreted as a means to providing trade policies with some control over the timing and the nature of opening up. Instead of debating about protectionism and free trade, it would be better to talk about the good commercial policy that reconciles the safeguarding of social stability with openness to international trade.

In order to carry out the study on *mondialisation*, the instruments that measure an economy's degree of openness are examined. First of all, the limitations of well-known indicators, like the average customs rate and other combined criteria, are pointed out, due to the binary nature on which they are constructed that does not take into account the gradual – and therefore not binary but dynamic – nature of economic policy. Blancheton proposes a revision of the most-used openness coefficient, although he invites the reader to bear in mind the bias of this coefficient and of others based on current prices or constant prices, whose complementarity alone can provide a more precise appraisal of the commercial openness of a national economy.

Using Bairoch's model, Blancheton examines the path of global commercial opening-up in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in its two most marked periods: from 1830 to 1913, and after 1945, when openness was more restrained, because of the shock of the 1930s and the ensuing closure. These are analysed by economic historians from a current-price perspective (Bairoch,

Economia e storia mondiale. Mitì e paradossi, 1996) and a constant-price perspective (Maddison, A., *The World Economy: a Millennial Perspective*, 2001), and lead to the consideration that *mondialisation's* primary obstacles are transportation costs and economic-policy intervention: although innovation can reduce costs, it cannot influence commercial policies, which therefore become a significant factor in historical analysis. Moreover, the two variables are not independent because, by encouraging competition, the reduction of transport costs may lead to a demand for protection, whereas the opposite effect may be observed in the long term.

The first part of the book ends with an analysis of three paths to *mondialisation*: the French way, the Japanese way and the American way. These situations clarify the connections between openness and economic development. Historical analysis reveals commercial openness to be a necessary condition for growth (as seen in Japan), especially in the face of the failure of the autarchic experience and the development strategies based on import-replacement industrialization. Nevertheless, at the risk of going against the flow of opinion, Blanchard argues that they are necessary in order to control the speed and the nature of liberalization. In other words, the rapid liberalization of trade does not necessarily imply stronger or more intense growth (France 1860). Free trade – Blancheton points out – seems to have been a good strategy for developed, highly-specialized economies (such as Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century); however controlling liberalization was important for many economies that were undergoing industrialization, such as the USA, Germany and Japan. This control does not necessarily imply a closure and it can be flexible enough to allow for the dynamics of openness. A national economy's trade policy, concludes Blancheton, is the product of internal relations as much as of the ability to resist external pressures.

The second and last part of the book deals with financial *mondialisation* in historical perspective and examines the controversial relationship between the international mobility of capital and economic growth. By putting national financial markets in contact with one another, financial integration leads to the creation of a single market at a global level. Capital mobility is in line with the nature of capitalism, and market agents – from national to multinational enterprises – pursue the aim of increasing productivity, and therefore profit, through foreign investments, taking into account the risks involved.

In order to understand the phenomenon of financial *mondialisation*, some questions about capital mobility must be asked. Is there authorization for the movement of capital? Is it large and rapid enough to influence differences in yields? Blancheton reviews the positions of the various schools of economic interpretation, comparing the advantages and the disadvantages of capital mobility. As in trade *mondialisation*, in financial integration we have the problem of highlighting some indexes of measurement. Starting with the analysis of the international movements of capital, Blancheton identifies the two quantitative approaches necessary to understand its dynamics – the stock level of foreign capital and the current-transaction settlement trend – and presents the parity covered by interest rates variable² (Keynes 1923) and the studies based on this index to measure international financial integration (Frankel 1989, Obstfeld and Taylor 2004). Lastly, Blancheton proposes examples of the synthetic approach, starting with the Feldstein and Horioka models. The analysis carried out on the path of financial integration refers to the Obstfeld and Taylor model: capital flows increase as a result of innovations in the technological field and in communication and information networks.

Generally the stages of financial *mondialisation* start and develop more slowly than those of commercial *mondialisation*. The earliest *mondialisation* had a one-way flow, from Western Europe to outlying areas. From 1890, instead of being a land of destination, the United States took on a leading role in the flow. Financial *mondialisation's* period of decline, which for trading had been the years between the two World Wars, lasted until the 1970s. Financial innovations and the success of a new capitalist paradigm, especially in the confrontation with the Soviet Union model of socialist market-planning, enabled the liberalization of capital movement to take off. In parallel, the great

² Starting with the theory of the parity of interest rates enunciated by John Maynard Keynes, according to which, if all other factors are equal, there is no difference at all between investing in foreign currency stock or domestic stock, while, if there is an unsecured parity, a potential positive or negative differential between foreign interest rates and domestic interest rates will be offset by an opposite exchange-rate differential. Parity is unsecured since, during the entire holding period, the investor is exposed to the exchange-rate risk. This theory envisages that investors be totally neutral to risk. Or else the theory of parity secured by interest rates is based on the hypothesis that the forward exchange be already negotiated at the moment of purchase, thereby annulling the exchange-rate risk.

stages of the international monetary system, from the weak financial integration of the early nineteenth century to the liberalization of capital in the 1970s, followed one another.

Monetary evolution is described on the basis of Mundell-Flemming's theoretical paradigm of the "triangle of incompatibilities", which states that an economy cannot achieve simultaneously an independent monetary policy, the free circulation of capital and flexibility of the exchange rate. Therefore the course of the monetary system may be seen as a series of sacrifices within Mundell's triangular model: the sacrifice of monetary policy during the Gold Standard, the monetary instability of the period between the two World Wars and the financial autarchy of Bretton Woods. Even today, according to Blancheton, the decision of the monetary authorities regarding financial integration swings between monetary independence, that guarantees stability but entails costs in the short term, and stability of the exchange rate, which facilitates the capacity for adjustment and guarantees flexibility, but involves risks.

The road to the European single currency clearly reveals the difficulty countries encountered in keeping exchange rates stable. Internal liberalization, codified by the Single European Act, with the creation of an area without internal frontiers for the free circulation of goods, people and capital, and the parallel movement to intensify capital mobility at an international level, have gradually made monetary stability more complex, as is borne out by the exchange crisis of 1992-93. Some years after the introduction of the Euro (1998), Blancheton shows that the advance of integration rests more on a political plan than on considerations of efficiency in economic terms. Whereas a national economy that pegs the exchange rate places itself individually in a position of foregoing any margin of manoeuvre, as far as monetary policy is concerned, as a multinational body the euro zone takes its place in Mundell's triangle at a different point "*qui combine parfaite mobilité international des capitaux, flottement pur et autonomie de la politique monétaire*" (p. 140).

Francesca Romana Lenzi
European University of Rome

V. FAVARO, *La modernizzazione militare nella Sicilia di Filippo II*, Palermo, Quaderni di "Mediterranea – Ricerche storiche", n. 10, pp. 284.

In his fine study on the War of Messina, Luis Ribot perspicaciously identified this episode at the end of the seventeenth century as the moment when the process of forming an Italian area of influence under the Spanish monarchy came to fruition. In this area, Sicily, Naples, Milan, Sardinia and the Tuscan garrisons proved they could put Madrid's political directives into practice and therefore organize themselves, act and interact – especially, but not exclusively, for military and defensive purposes – with a certain degree of independence.¹

If the War of Messina was the point of arrival, Valentina Favaro's book on the military modernization of Sicily in the sixteenth century identifies Philip II's reign as the crucial period when this process got under way, a process which had begun with Charles V but which achieved its first significant results in the second half of the sixteenth century. There is, in fact, no doubt that in the case of Sicily – within the context of the Spanish Crown's other Italian territories – we cannot speak of a real military revolution and its consequences until the period between the end of the 1550s and the mid-1570s, in other words between the disastrous attempt to recapture Tripoli in 1559, under the command of the Viceroy of Sicily, Duke di Medinaceli, and the loss of Le Goletta and Tunis in 1574, at the end of Don John of Austria's unsuccessful expedition.

The choice of these two episodes to define the period, when the need to speed up the process of reforming Sicily's defence system was felt most acutely, reminds the reader symbolically to what great extent Sicily – much more than Spain's other territories in Italy, with the sole partial exception of Naples – was contemporaneously part of another military and geopolitical context that was essential for the Spanish Crown's survival: the Mediterranean. Valentina Favaro's book brings together an analysis of Spanish policy at different levels and the need to consider Sicily in the Italian and Mediterranean context. This methodological decision is made explicit by there being a chapter in the

¹ L. A. Ribot García, *La Monarquía de España y la guerra de Mesina (1674-1678)*, (Madrid 2002).

book which deals specifically with the complex relationship between military structure in Sicily and maintaining the Spanish Crown's North African garrisons in the second half of the sixteenth century, a subject to which the three levels of analysis all contribute in equal measure.

The book starts with an analysis of the underlying reasons for the change in defensive strategies. There follows a treatment of the more technical aspects of the Spanish government's interventions in Sicily to renew the island's traditional defence system which was very decentralized and by that time obsolete, and replace it with a more modern, centralized system based on rationalization which had developed from the end of the fifteenth century, especially with regard to the increasingly generalized use of guns. Analyzed separately from three angles, that of the area's defence, (the coastal towers and the urban fortifications, with their respective artillery quota), the organization and arming of troops (the *tercio*, the Spanish soldiers and the cavalry) and naval defence (the galleys), these distinct questions have at least three aspects in common.

First of all, the book emphasizes the important role of mediation played by the Viceroys, as far as Sicily was concerned: the Spanish monarch's highest authority in Sicily carried out the King's orders, weighing up the interests which were at stake each time. It was not merely a matter of respecting the institutional prerogatives of local territorial institutions, such as, for example, the cities, but also of knowing how to interpret a sentiment of loyalty to the Crown, not on the part of the nobility alone, but one which was expressed, first and foremost, through military services and therefore in the island's defence.

Just how essential this role of mediation was for the success of the reforms and, more generally, for the efficient functioning of the overall military organization in Sicily, was evident when in the 1570s a Neapolitan nobleman, Carlo d'Avalos, was appointed to lead the new light-cavalry corps, even though many Sicilian aristocrats and Spanish commanding officers in Sicily had aspired to the post. The tension that arose over the management of the light cavalry, and the clashes over this issue between d'Avalos and the Viceroy Duke di Terranova, undermined, right from the start, the new corps' establishment on the island, and jeopardized its activities for a long time.

Secondly, it is important to stress the parallel that can be drawn between the actions attempted, or accomplished, in Sicily and those which characterized

similar action undertaken by Philip II in other areas of the Spanish Monarchy. This parallel enables us to grasp the uniformity of intent but also the search for the best solutions in each territory; in this respect, the measures adopted to improve the *tercio's* efficacy and to form the Kingdom's militia are exemplary.

Lastly, when dealing with each of the three questions – territorial defence, the organization of the forces and protection from the sea – Valentina Favaro does not lose sight of the fundamental issue over financing military expenditure. It is, doubtless, true that, just as in the case of the reform of the defence system, public-finance measures were partly the result of adopting the king's policies locally, but there are also aspects which make the case of Sicily quite distinct and, therefore, specially worthy of attention. Sicily was the only territory of the Spanish Crown that, during the last quarter of the sixteenth century – and despite the devastating consequences, not only of the increase in military expenditure but also of Philip II's defaulting on payments in 1575 and in 1596 – managed to pay back a large sum of the public debt to stock-holders, albeit by massive recourse to the sale of posts and offices.

As is seen in this last example, departing from what has become the conventional view among historians on the processes of military modernization in the second half of the sixteenth century in Europe, and in particular in that part of Europe under the Spanish monarchy, this book revolutionizes what we know about Sicily, using documentation, for the most part hitherto unpublished. All in all, with her reconstruction of the convoluted progress of the reform processes of Sicily's defence system during the reign of Philip II, Valentina Favaro contributes to a new way of interpreting the dynamics of conflict and shared interests that characterized the relations between the centralized power, the local elite and local institutions during the centuries-old history of the Spanish monarchy.

Gaetano Sabatini
University of Rome III

M.E. GARCÍA GUERRA and G. DE LUCA (eds.), *Il mercato del credito in età moderna. Reti e operatori finanziari nello spazio europeo*, Milan, Angeli, 2009, pp. 307.

The study of credit is one of those issues which has always ranked high in the agenda of researchers. Traditionally, historians have invested a great deal of time and effort in analyzing the connections between credit and economic growth and this has led to the development of a line of research which, as *Il mercato del credito in età moderna* shows, is still very vibrant.

The book is a collection of twelve papers (plus one introductory essay), written by a group of Spanish, French and Italian historians with the aim of analyzing the role of credit in the Castilian, French and Italian economies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These papers have been written from a broad perspective, which includes both traditional and more modern elements. Most of the papers deal with the economic aspects of credit, but the book includes new approaches, too, and is imbued with the notion that, as well as purely economic considerations, credit also had a social significance, constituting an important element in the expansion of the complex networks of influence which governed political and social life during the early modern period, as shown in the paper by J.L. de los Mozos.

The convincing and well-documented papers by H. Casado Alonso, J. de Santiago and A. Marcos Martín deal with some of the restrictions which help explain the expansion of credit in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Castile. According to H. Casado, the limited use of currency in daily transactions in sixteenth-century Castile created an acutely-felt need for a means of payment, which prompted the growth of credit. This seems to have changed during the seventeenth century, with the massive issuing of low-value copper currency (“*vellón*”). During the previous period the Castilian economy had to face the problems posed by the scarcity of a means of payment, but the expansion of the “*vellón*” during the seventeenth century provided the Castilians with more than enough low-value currency and, as J. de Santiago’s paper suggests, this tended to reduce the use of credit in most transactions in seventeenth-century Madrid.

The papers we have examined hitherto deal with private credit, but it is common knowledge that the financial needs of the states of that period were

also responsible for the growth of credit, which is the subject of the paper by A. Marcos Martín. One of the main difficulties of most states in the early-modern period was that expenditure tended to considerably exceed ordinary revenues. In the case of Castile this problem was further exacerbated by some aspects of the policy-making process of the Castilian Crown, such as the secondary role of the Department of Finances (*Consejo de Hacienda*) within the sphere of government. Contrary to present-day practice, the Castilian Crown pursued an ambitious and expensive foreign policy without taking costs into account, which caused public expenditure to rise. With the aim of ensuring the adoption of a policy that was more realistically adapted to the country's real fiscal and financial resources, in 1616 the possibility of creating a new committee (the *Junta de Provisiones*) was debated. According to the proposal's promoter, a member of the *Consejo de Hacienda* would sit on the new *Junta*, together with representatives of other departments of the Castilian government. As well as increasing the influence of the financial departments within the top spheres of the Castilian administration, this would have been an important step towards checking the Castilian government's growing expenditure. A. Marcos Martín reminds us that the project failed, but it should be pointed out that this reflected a problem that is familiar to the modern reader, especially in countries such as Spain where the growth of public expenditure during the last decades has been driven, at least in part, by regional governments with the capacity to determine the level of their annual expenditure, but without the will to adapt this expenditure to their real revenues (in many cases grants from central government).

The scarcity of means of payment and the ever-increasing financial needs of the states of the time stimulated the demand for public and private credit in Castile, Italy and France. Although some papers in the book such as that by M. Carboni and M. Fornassari on Bologna, focus on certain aspects of the public credit systems, most articles deal with private credit. This is one of the book's greatest merits in that, until recent decades, the complex public-credit systems set up by the states of the time have been the subject of a good deal of historical research.

As the papers by H. Casado, J. C. Zoffo, L. Ortega and J. López-Salazar, M. Cattini, G. Béaur and J. de Santiago show, the techniques developed in Castile, Italy and France to meet the growing demands of private credit were basically

the same. Leaving aside the undeniable importance of informal credit, which by its very nature has not left many traces in our documentary records, we find a clear difference between short-term credit (Castilian *cartas de obligación*) and long-term credit (Castilian *censos* and Italian *censo francabile fruttifero*). Spanish historians have, traditionally, been well aware of the importance of the *censos* and the well-documented paper by L.Ortega and J. López-Salazar sees in this financial issue a means of defending the peasantry from usury. The authors also emphasize that, thanks to the "*censos*", part of the huge wealth of the Castilian oligarchies (before 1608), and of the Church, was channelled into investing in the purchase of land. The interesting paper by M. Cattini suggests that something very similar happened in the fertile plains of northern Italy at the same time. It is noteworthy that L. Ortega and J. López -Salazar and M. Cattini all share the same opinion on the significance of the *censos*, an opinion stated previously by other historians, such as E. Fernández de Pinedo and J.L. Pereira Iglesias¹.

However the importance of the *censos* should not hide the fact that there were other means of private credit, such as the "*cartas de obligación*" previously mentioned, the role of which seems undeniable after the reader has perused the interesting papers by H. Casado, J. C. Zoffio and L. Ortega, and J. López-Salazar. It seems fair to say that their research has resulted in greater knowledge about an important and widely-used means of short-term credit, which has tended to have been neglected by researchers and historians.

The evidence offered by the papers in this book shows that the Castilian, Italian and French economics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were able to create means of private credit well-suited to their needs, and reveals that this process went hand-in-hand with the simultaneous development of a group of financial intermediaries (the Castilian *corredores* and the Milanese *sensali*), who put the supply of, and demand for, credit in contact with one another. The records of the Castilian town councils of the time reveal that the *corredores* were an important part of the economic and social life of the country's cities, and a similar situation was to be found in Italy. Hitherto, very

¹ E. FERNÁNDEZ DE PINEDO: "Actitudes del campesino parcelario ante la usura y el crédito rural (siglos XVI al XVIII), *Dinero y crédito*, (Madrid 1978), pp. 374 and 379. J.L. PEREIRA IGLESIAS, *El préstamo hipotecario en el Antiguo Régimen. Los censos al quilar*, (Cadiz 1995), pp. 205.

little has been published on this subject, and the papers by E. G. Guerra and G. de Luca help to fill this gap, and provide the reader with a convincing view of the exact role played by these financial intermediaries in Castilian and Italian cities during the first centuries of the early-modern period.

Taken as a whole, the papers in this book consider the connection between private credit and economic development in Italy and Castile during the two first centuries of the early-modern period. The papers by L. Ortega and J. López-Salazar, M. Carboni, E. García Guerra and G. de Luca include some evidence, which deserves further consideration. They suggest that the increasing supply of means of private credit during the sixteenth century contributed to the growth of the Castilian and Milanese economies of the time. The economic climate changed during the seventeenth century, when both areas felt the consequences of the crisis of their previously flourishing urban economies, which prompted the flight towards investing in agriculture and the public debt. The relatively advanced financial systems inherited from the previous phase were not able to prevent this change, and they merely adapted to the new economic environment, following increasingly more conservative strategies, such as investment in land and state securities. Thus, regarded from this perspective, *Il mercato del credito in età moderna* may be considered a useful reminder of the old and frequently-forgotten economic truth that financial systems alone do not generate economic growth and development, a truth that ought to be borne in mind in the troubled circumstances of today's world economy.

José Ignacio Andrés Ucendo
University of the Basque Country

A. GOTTARELLI, F. PINO (eds.), *Carte di Raffaele Mattioli (1925-1945)*, Intesa Sanpaolo, Turin, 2009, pp. LXXV, 547 (Archivio Storico San Paolo, Collana Inventari).

This is another volume from the series *Collana Inventari dell'Archivio Storico di Intesa Sanpaolo*, regarding the documentation of *Banca Commerciale Italiana* and its Managing Director, Raffaele Mattioli. In 2000, another book was

published on the office records of two administrators, Mattioli (1933-1972) and Michelangelo Facconi (1933-1939), which concerned various dealings of the bank and its internal organization, as well as correspondence with institutions and private individuals.

This book, edited by Gottarelli and Pino, deals with the personal papers, consisting for the most part of correspondence, both official and informal.

Basically, a new figure emerges, albeit one that is not totally unique in the years that straddled the Fascist regime and the Second World War (for example, Adriano Olivetti), that of the humanist banker, the shrewd but enlightened administrator, of necessity well-anchored to the political situation of the time, but who, nonetheless, maintained his independence of judgement and his ideological freedom. This is borne out by Mattioli's relations with the Italian Left and Togliatti, through his friendship with the Catholic Communist Franco Rodano and the economist Piero Sraffa. In the 1930s, the Studies Department of Banca Commerciale became a sort of "workshop" for the non-clerical and anti-Fascist managerial class and was frequented by Ugo La Malfa, Giovanni Malagodi, Guido Carli and Enrico Cuccia.

Sandro Gerbi, son of Antonello Gerbi, the Head of Comit's Research Department and a close collaborator of Mattioli's, recently observed: "*There was something more profound that brought Mattioli closer, first to Rodano and then to Togliatti: a passion they had in common to find new "revolutionary" outcomes to the issues of the day. For the liberal-bourgeois banker, it was a matter of building a modern, European Italy, based on an advanced capitalism ... The third De Gasperi government, a broad anti-Fascist coalition, had just fallen. Mattioli, however, believed it essential that the Communist Party returned to the government – which did not happen – to take part in the recovery and redevelopment. He, therefore, with the assistance of Malagodi and Rodano, prepared a concise economic-policy programme ... in the form of a letter to Togliatti. Mattioli's suggestions aimed to curb inflation without making the working classes suffer the most, and so he proposed a combination of taxes and investment incentives. However, it was all with careful attention to the accounts, in other words, setting aside ideological and party prejudices, and paying attention to financial compatibilities*" (*Raffaele Mattioli e l'interesse generale: ciclo di conferenze e seminari "L'uomo e il denaro". Milan. 14 November 2005*). "Sound finances, today, in Italy", wrote Mattioli after the war, "are not a

reactionary interest ... they are a national interest – an interest of the entire nation – and if it has to matter more to some people than to others then it has to matter to those very classes which your party addresses and which should be the most concerned that, at long last, after the long years of high-living at their expense, the state be administered in such a way to protect their reserves and vital requirements”.

As was pointed out a few years ago, Mattioli's vision was that of the last of the great bourgeoisie, who rejected petit-bourgeois capitalism and whose thinking foreshadowed the IRI model and envisaged a regulated economy and control without nationalizations (Antonio Jannazzo, *Il liberalismo italiano del Novecento: da Giolitti a Malagodi*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2003).

A disciple and a friend of Benedetto Croce, in the post-war years Mattioli, using the Banca Commerciale Italiana, was a great patron of culture, financing reviews (*La Fiera Letteraria*, *La Cultura*), institutions (he was president and sponsor of Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici) and publishing houses. In 1938 he had taken over the ownership of the Ricciardi publishing house in Naples, opening an office in Milan in 1951 and starting the famous series *La letteratura italiana. Storia e testi*. In 1944, he gave shelter to Carlo Emilio Gadda, who had been evacuated from bomb-damaged Florence. Again, in the 1940s, he started Banca Commerciale Italiana's series *Studi e ricerche di storia economica italiana nell'età del Risorgimento*. He also invented the “Struzzo” (ostrich) logo for Einaudi; in 1971, he was the driving force behind the founding of Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi in Florence, and in 1971 became its chairman.

We must not forget, after the racial laws of 1938, his “widespread solidarity work” for leading personalities and persecuted families, as well as for prisoners and missing soldiers. At the same time, he was concerned about protecting the assets deposited by the bank's customers.

There is ample evidence of these various activities in the 2,540 correspondence files. Francesca Pino's Introduction points out that all the documentation “*is extremely valuable as evidence of the quality and the development ... of the relations between the world of politics and banks, and between banks and large, medium-sized and small enterprises*” in a very big geographical area, as well as showing evidence “*of the informality of Raffaele Mattioli's circle*”.

The archivist of the historical archives of the Banca Intesa Sanpaolo writes: “Having refused to go back north in 1944 ..., Mattioli increased the contacts he already had with the anti-Fascist forces, who had not yet organised themselves into parties ... It is the final period of that long rebellious political and cultural planning that had characterized the Italian intellectual coterie in the 1920s and the 1930s ... Mattioli was its driving force ... but his main concern was to defend high culture, in view of its revival and development after the war”.

In almost all of Banca Commerciale Italiana's collections there are documents stemming from Raffaele Mattioli's operations; many others are to be found in private collections, first and foremost among the family papers donated by the Mattioli family. Furthermore, thanks to the recovery of personal archives by the Archivio Storico di Intesa Sanpaolo, the papers of many of Mattioli's collaborators, such as Massimiliano Majnoni (in digital copy), Filippo Migliorisi, Emilio Brusa, Domenico Boffito, Antonello Gerbi, Giovanni Malgodi and Antonio Rossi, are now available.

The “complementary” external sources include the huge quantity of documents from the archives of Mattioli's correspondents, housed, for the most part, in institutes and foundations that have made them available for consultation in recent years: the archive of the Ricciardi publishing house which may now be consulted at Milan University's APICE (Archivi della parola, dell'immagine e della comunicazione editoriale) Centre, and the Raffaele Mattioli Library, specialized in political economy, owned by the Fondazione Mattioli per la Storia del Pensiero Economico, which is a great help in reconstructing Mattioli's culture.

Alongside the inventory of Raffaele Mattioli's papers, there are two recent publications of hitherto-unpublished writings, kept in the Archivio storico di Intesa Sanpaolo: Raffaele Mattioli, *Uscire dalla crisi. Comunicazioni interne sul salvataggio della Banca Commerciale Italiana 1933-34* and Giovanni Malagodi, *Dalla crisi allo sviluppo. Scritti per la riorganizzazione delle filiali Comit, 1934-1935*, both edited by Francesca Pino and Francesca Gaido (Aragno, Turin, 2010).

Ludovica de Courten

Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities

Archive General Management – Rome

D. STRANGIO, *Decolonizzazione e sviluppo economico. Dalla Cassa per la circolazione monetaria della Somalia alla Banca nazionale somala: il ruolo della Banca d'Italia (1947-1960)*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2010, pp. 95.

For many years historiography dealing with the Italian colonial experience in Africa was, on the whole, characterised by delays and silence, almost as though it wanted to consign to oblivion embarrassing recollections. However, recent years have seen a marked reversal in this trend: issues relating to the Italian possessions overseas are nowadays at the centre of wide and diverse research, a result which has been reached with archive investigation that has emphasized the value of documentation that was previously little-known or had never even been published. Donatella Strangio's book is part of this widening of perspective. Making ample and expert use of the wealth of archive material kept at the Bank of Italy, she highlights the situation of Somalia at the end of World War Two. In fact, as Strangio points out, the aim of her research was not to present the period of military conquest of Somalia, or the setting-up of the colonial organisation. Her analysis concentrates on a definite period (1947-1960), when the United Nations Organisation called on Italy to handle the difficult transition to the birth of an independent country. The historical changes Somalia experienced after the end of World War Two enables Strangio to go back to the deep contradictions that had characterized Italy's relations with her overseas territories, contradictions which left their mark on colonial policy then, and also in the following era, when it was a matter of establishing relations with countries that were setting out on the road to independence.

The first of the book's seven chapters illustrates why Italy's colonial past has been consigned to a sort of oblivion, and provides information that helps us to understand the problems the Italian banking system came up against when, during the first thirty years of the twentieth century, it had to promote the economic development of the colonial territories. The difficulties connected with remitting currency and with the backwardness of the local economies did not, however, prevent the banks, and especially the Bank of Italy, from playing a major role in building railways and an efficient commercial infrastructure.

After having stated her field of reference, Donatella Strangio defines the main issues of her research, beginning with the grave deficiencies which, after 1945, hampered Somalia both in embarking upon a road to total independence

and in defining the development plans to be applied to the country. In fact, an agricultural system, for the most part oriented towards local consumption, and a weak manufacturing system rendered the balance of payments extremely unstable and subject to the seesaw trends of the price of bananas – Somalia's sole export – on the international market. In such a situation, it is not hard to understand why the trusteeship of the ex-colony, which was given to Italy by the United Nations, was an arduous task with no immediate benefits.

After the Resolution 284-A (IV) of 21 November 1949, the United Nations Organisation decided on the "forming of a particular form of administration, on the basis of which the independence of the ex-colonies would be recognised,, largely in an un-predetermined manner and only after a period of training and preparing the population" (p.32). In the case of Somalia, the management of the transition phase - the protectorate - fell to Italy in its capacity as the administrative authority. Right from the beginning, in order to ensure success for the AFIS (Amministrazione fiduciaria italiana in Somalia – Italian Trusteeship's Administration in Somalia), it was obvious that the Bank of Italy had to be involved, and it was called upon to intervene in managing monetary policy. In this sense, one of the first measures to be adopted, to encourage setting out on the road to self-government, was the creation of a monetary regime based on the *somalo*, a currency which, in fact, began to be in circulation from 1950 onwards. Authority in the monetary field was entrusted to the Cassa per la circolazione monetaria della Somalia s.p.a. (Bank for Currency Circulation in Somalia Ltd.), a company with a capital of 87.5 million lire divided into one thousand shares, 99.5% of which were underwritten by the Italian African Ministry.

In 1960, this period of guardianship ended, and Somalia finally achieved its independence. Consequently, the Somalian National Bank was founded. One of the first measures launched by the Somalian authorities was the introduction of a new currency, the Somalian shilling, which was the umpteenth change in the currency system. It took quite a long time to be accepted by the population which, over some fifty years, had seen a succession of different monetary units. However, even after the proclamation of independence, the Bank of Italy continued to be involved in Somalian affairs. The Bank of Italy no longer managed the situation directly, but was involved in the technical and professional training of a rising generation of Somalian officials, who, in a relatively short period of time, had to learn how to move on international financial markets.

The transition period lasted about fifteen years, but when it was over, the overall situation appeared rather disappointing, as Donatella Strangio points out. The lack of a real political, economic and social plan, together with the objective difficulties in attracting foreign investment and enabling the country to overcome its chronic economic underdevelopment, rendered even more obvious the limitations of the Italians' return to Africa, an operation which was partially perceived as a clumsy attempt to keep alive systems and attitudes that called very much to mind the colonial period.

Manuel Vaquero Piñeiro
University of Perugia

A. PEDONE and G. TONIOLO (eds.), *Tra imprese e istituzioni. 100 anni di Assonime*, 6 vols., Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2010.

The centenary of the Italian Joint Stock Companies' Association (Assonime) is an important event. Its significance is not merely commemorative: Assonime's history enables us to re-examine, in a long-term perspective, the ability of enterprises to respond to developments in their national and international setting. This is what the publication of these six volumes sets out to achieve. The volumes, edited by Antonello Pedone and Gianni Toniolo, are the result of research carried out for the centenary.

There is no doubt that the job Assonime has done since its founding in Rome on 22 November 1910 has been complicated. The desire to go beyond traditional sectoral divisions, which has been a feature of its operations, has highlighted the underlying intention to set itself an overall goal; that of safeguarding the different ways of running enterprises. The difference between Assonime and a syndicate of commercial interests appears evident. As Luigi Abete points out in his preface, the aim is to consider the enterprise in its entirety.¹ Unlike other industrial

¹ L. Abete, *Prefazione. Assonime ieri, oggi e domani* in G. Toniolo, F. Salsano, *Da Quota 90 allo Sme*, p.V.

associations, right from the beginning, Assonime grouped together enterprises with a similar legal structure and a similar size rather than grouping them according to their production sector.² And this is an aspect which grew over the years, with the inclusion of not only private enterprises, but also public enterprises and state holding companies, as well as banks and insurance companies.³ But, perhaps, this capacity to represent such a broad sector is ascribable to the many elements of continuity, which characterised the development of Italian capitalism during the twentieth century.⁴

It is, however, clear that there is an affinity with the sector's trade union organizations, where the safeguarding of interests among professional practices is concerned, especially in the field of taxation.⁵ And, all in all – as Antonio Pedone's fine paper points out – the association has acted on two different levels: on the one hand, playing an external conciliation role between the public authorities and corporate enterprises, and on the other, acting internally to harmonize the interests among shareholders, often in conflict with one another.⁶

The contingent factor in the creation of Assonime was the fear that, after the 1907 crisis, taxes on enterprises might increase at a time when economic information was marginal.⁷ But Assonime was created in a period of fervour for associations: in 1906 the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* (Trade Unions Federation) was founded, and *Confindustria* (General Confederation of Italian Industry) came into being in Turin on 5 May 1910, a few months before the creation of Assonime. However, in the case of Assonime, this general strategy faced wide-ranging objectives, which aimed to sway public opinion in favour

² F. Gallo, *Assonime e la fiscalità d'impresa: considerazioni generali* in A. Pedone, F. Gallo (eds.), *Imposte e sviluppo economico*, vol. 3, p.127.

³ G. Visentini, *Riflessioni sull'influenza dell'Assonime nella regolamentazione dell'economia durante il secolo della sua vita*, in G. Visentini, C. Carboni, *Assonime: una lobby istituzionale*, vol. 6, p.15.

⁴ A. Colli, M. Vasta, *I grandi gruppi nel capitalismo italiano del Novecento* in F. Coltorti, *L'informazione finanziaria e informazione finanziaria nel Novecento*, vol. 5, p. 175.

⁵ Assonime, 1927, *Sedici anni di attività della Associazione fra le società italiane per azioni 1911-1927*, (Castaldi, Rome) p. IX, quoted by A. Pedone, *L'evoluzione del sistema tributario italiano e il ruolo di Assonime* in A. Pedone, F. Gallo (eds.), *Imposte e sviluppo economico op.cit.*, p. 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷ F. Coltorti, *L'informazione finanziaria negli ultimi cento anni: un profilo storico* in Id., *Grandi gruppi e informazione finanziaria op.cit.*, pp. 14-15.

of Italy's industrialization process, by involving leading personalities from the universities, the professions and the world of politics. It was a period of history when the modernization of industry was underway and, already on the eve of the First World War, allowed a glimpse of the new system, based on mass production.⁹ At the same time, right from the start, Assonime's activities featured the need to build a permanent bond between economics and the law⁹. In this perspective, one of Assonime's first proposals was to set up a special joint-stock bank to complement the operations of the mixed banks. The proposal was discussed, but not accepted, by Luigi Einaudi, Attilio Cabiati and Maffeo Pantaloni.¹⁰ It became a reality more than twenty years later, with the Banking Law of 1936.¹¹

This trend became more pronounced in some periods, when important decisions were taken that involved Italy's standing in the international setting. In particular, in the first volume, Gianni Toniolo and Fernando Salsano identify four periods when Assonime followed the development of national events more closely: the shift to protectionism in 1925 and the subsequent revaluation accomplished with "Quota 90", the consequences of the 1929 crash, the creation of the European Economic Community, and participation in the European Monetary System. Those in charge of Assonime often made excellent contributions to discussions in which they took part. The new Statute of 1927 stressed the study of the Italian economy of that period, whence also emerged the influence of the *Carta del Lavoro* (Labour Charter), drawn up in 1927.¹² In line with this trend, in 1928, Assonime set up its own statistics service to replace that of *Credito Italiano*.¹³ Thus, Assonime developed technically, and, according to Guarneri, became an influential source of reports and surveys.¹⁴ Even in the presence of important official bodies, such as *Confindustria* and the *Associazione Bancaria Italiana*, Assonime was able to carve out an authoritative

⁹ A. Colli, M. Vasta, *I grandi gruppi nel capitalismo italiano del Novecento* in F. Coltorti, *L'informazione finanziaria op.cit.*, pp. 114-115.

⁹ G. Visentini, *Riflessioni sull'influenza dell'Assonime op.cit.*, p.5.

¹⁰ G. Narcozzi, G. Piluso, *Il sistema finanziario e la Borsa*, vol. 2, pp. 29-31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹² G. Vicentini, *Riflessioni sull'influenza oc.cit.*, p.10.

¹³ F. Coltorti, *L'informazione finanziaria oc.cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ G. Narcozzi, G. Piluso, *Il sistema finanziario e la borsa oc.cit.*, p. 45.

role for itself in the mediation between central authorities and enterprises. The results were very different from those aimed at, because, *inter alia*, the decisions of the Minister of Finance Volpi, who had been Chairman of Assonime between 1920 and 1921, tended to an interventionist policy in enterprise-financing, which was strongly opposed by Assonime.

With the worsening of the recession from the early 1930s, Assonime became "one of the main crossroads for proposals, confrontation and the solution of problems"¹⁵ "in that it represented the main enterprises and banks, as an authoritative interlocutor with the legislator because of its technical competence in legal and fiscal matters".¹⁶ Guarnieri was one of the protagonists of economic policy during those years, and generally speaking the strategy was to influence the most important decisions, as was seen with the Banking Law of 1936. On the whole, however, "Assonime's voice appeared muffled" compared to the period 1925 and 1927.¹⁷ In fact, conditions had changed: in the face of an exogenous shock of huge significance, the capitalist system changed substantially, requiring a great deal of government action.¹⁸

At the end of World War Two, Assonime emphasized its advisory function, which was legitimized by *Confindustria* in questions involving legal and taxation issues.¹⁹ This, therefore, was the period when Assonime's function as a "link between politicians, public administration and the entrepreneurial world"²⁰ was particularly marked. Attention was concentrated on the reform of the taxation system, with the first stage of the Law of 6 August 1954.²¹ Authoritative collaborators were used, including Cesare Cosciani. These were the years when Assonime's strategy was of the "institutional lobby"-type,²² which brought a new feature to the traditional relationship of mediation between enterprises and institutions. Subsequently, Assonime's influence increased: with the

¹⁵ G. Toniolo, F. Salsano, *Da Quota 90 allo Sme oc.cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁶ G. Narcozzi, G. Piluso, *Il sistema finanziario oc.cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁷ *Ivi*, p. 10.

¹⁸ G. Visentini, *Riflessioni sull'influenza oc.cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁹ F. Gallo, *Assonime e la fiscalità oc.cit.*, p. 132.

²⁰ G. Toniolo, F. Salsano, *Da Quota 90 oc.cit.*, p. 75.

²¹ F. Vitale, *L'autonomia imposta sulle società del 1954* in A. Pedone, F. Gallo (eds.) *Imposte e sviluppo economico oc.cit.*, p. 155.

²² C. Carboni, *Rappresentare l'impresa e il mercato* in G. Visentini, C. Carboni, *Assonime oc.cit.*, p. 82.

Committee for the study of tax reform, formed in the early 1960s, more attention was given to Assonime's opinions.²³ However, the differing interests which weakened the organizations that represented the industrialists, persisted. Hence, Assonime's difficulties in formulating a common strategy. Nevertheless the association took part in the meetings where decisions of strategic importance were taken.²⁴ An acceptance of the reform of Italy's financial system, which aimed to discourage equity capital, could be detected.²⁵ As the European situation gradually became clearer, Assonime took on new functions: the standardization of regulations at home saw Assonime increase its prerogatives of research and initiatives. Similarly, at the same time, the need was felt to gain access to an equity market, rather than a bond market, which could reduce the technological and competitive gap with other EEC countries. The issue became crucial when the electrical industry was nationalized, where there was an attempt to limit the effects of the nationalization on the stock market.²⁶ However, it was the new political situation, created with the beginning of the era of centre-left government, that gave Assonime new tasks. The amortization issue became crucial and studies were carried out to compare the Italian situation with that of other countries.²⁷ In June 1962, a commission was set up to "study the problems of the reform of company law", with Alfredo De Gregorio as its Chairman.²⁸ Assonime's influence was evident, even though the proposals did not become a concrete systematic legislative measure. This was due to the fact that, when in 1967, it was time for the bill to be drawn up, the Centre-Left Government had weakened its initial drive and resolution for reform.²⁹ A further seven years went by before the reform of company law was launched.

²³ F. Gallo, F. Vitale, *La preparazione della riforma fiscale del 1971 con particolare riferimento al problema della doppia imposizione degli utili* in A. Pedone, F. Gallo (eds.), *Imposte e sviluppo economico oc.cit.*, p. 166.

²⁴ G. Toniolo, F. Salsano, *Da Quota 90 oc.cit.*, p. 85.

²⁵ G. Narcozzi, G. Piluso, *Il sistema finanziario, oc.cit.*, p. 65.

²⁶ *Relazione Assonime*, 1963, reported in *ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁷ F. Gastaldi, M. G. Pazienza, *Sistema produttivo e sistema tributario: accumulazione di capitale e tassazione delle società* in A. Pedone, F. Gallo (eds.), *Imposte e sviluppo economico oc.cit.*, p. 81.

²⁸ P. Marchetti, *Dalla vigilia del centrosinistra agli anni Ottanta* in A. Padoa Schioppa, P. Marchetti, *La società per azioni oc.cit.*, p. 137.

²⁹ *Ivi*, p. 157.

Assonime's influence changed in the 1970s, first of all with stagflation and then with the launching of the European Monetary System, when Italy was called on to make some important decisions. Assonime's top management warned against the risks of devaluation/inflation, and higher productivity became vital to compete in the international field. Although Assonime did not adopt a definite stance in the debate about participation in the EMS, there is no doubt that Italy's joining was seen as a way of curbing spiralling inflation.³⁰

In the 1980s relations with the institutions intensified through the personal abilities of prominent people, who were at the head of Assinome³¹. This was the time of the so-called "personalization of relations"³², which was a feature of external relations, more so than in the past. But, by this time, Italian capitalism was undergoing radical changes, with the deindustrialization of heavy industry. Nevertheless, the mid-1980s saw the beginning of a more cautious phase, the result of greater uncertainty, and as a result Assonime had less voice in legislative matters "both formally and informally"³³. Assonime was undergoing an identity crisis, because of the changes to production systems: the industrial capitalism of the big captains of industry – Pirelli, Agnelli, Olivetti and Marzotto – was in retreat, and post-industrial heterogeneity was appearing, which was difficult to represent because the political scene, proved particularly unstable.³⁴

Since 2000, Assonime has exerted "soft-pressure", with large-scale use of the Internet.³⁵ Service production lines have been opened, the range of action and influence has been widened at a European level, and discussions with politicians have been partially resumed.³⁶ In short, over a thirty-year period, Assonime has experienced "the peak, the exclusion and then a phase of recovery" of its affairs.³⁷ Generally speaking, these swings have been due to

³⁰ G. Toniolo, F. Salsano, *Da Quota 90 oc.cit.*, p. 128.

³¹ E. Giorgini, *Il lobbismo tecnico: tre casi di studio* in G. Visentini, C. Carboni, *Assonime oc.cit.*, p. 119.

³² *Ibidem.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁴ C. Carboni, *Rappresentare l'impresa oc.cit.*, pp. 87-89.

³⁵ E. Giorgini, *Il lobbismo tecnico oc.cit.*, pp.120-121.

³⁶ C. Carboni, *Rappresentare l'impresa oc.cit.*, p. 88.

³⁷ C. Carboni, *Una lobby tecnico-strategica delle élite economiche* in G. Visentini, C. Carboni, *Assonime oc.cit.*, p. 141.

external causes and the changes Italy has undergone has played an important part, but they have also been due to internal reasons, such as the handing-over of the leadership from one generation to another.³⁸ Today, in the European context, Assonime is an important point of reference in the search for “a stable system of agreed regulations to govern the economies, which will support the integration process, reassure investors and keep currency and public finances out of the electoral stakes”.³⁹ This is a complex and stimulating challenge which Assonime seems able to meet, in view of the competence its executive has shown over the past hundred years, especially when dealing with major international issues.

Francesco Dandolo

“Federico II” University of Naples

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ S. Micossi, *Postfazione* in G. Visentini, C. Carboni, *Assonime oc.cit.*, p. 177.

