

Silvia A. Conca Messina, Stéphane Le Bras, Paolo Tedeschi, Manuel Vaquero Piñeiro (eds.), *A History of Wine in Europe, 19th to 20th Centuries*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 2 vols., Volume I, *Wine-growing and Regional Features*, pp. 305; Volume II, *Markets, Trade and Regulation of Quality*, pp. 277.

Winemaking studies have become an increasingly popular field, with contributions from scholars of many different nationalities and disciplines, in parallel with the recent growth in the economic importance of wine throughout Europe and beyond. This two-volume history of wine and winemaking in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is a valuable contribution to the literature. The editors' exhaustive introduction, twenty essays, plus a rich selection of charts, tables and maps, trace the evolution in the last two centuries of a sector of economic activity that is deeply rooted in the European and Mediterranean food culture. As the editors remark in their introduction, over the two centuries the wine sector experienced an acceleration in growth in terms of both quantity and, more importantly, quality.

Although Europe winemaking suffered devastation from natural disasters like cryptogamic vine diseases, not to mention economic crises and two world wars, the continent is still the world leader in wine production and exports, just as it was in the nineteenth century, and continues to stay well ahead of the non-European competitors that have emerged in the last thirty years. France, long synonymous with high-quality wines, continues to be seen as a model by many producers and easily maintains its reputation as home to the best wines in the world. Italy, in turn, has ascended the ranks of international wine-

making, recently becoming the world's largest wine producer. The national volume of output is not, however, the most useful basis for a study of the historical context of the winemaking sector. In fact, as the editors make clear, one cannot really speak of an Italian, French, or Spanish wine, but rather of Barolo, Bordeaux, Champagne, Chianti, and the many other wines that are an expression of environmental, manufacturing and cultural conditions which have developed over time and are unique to a particular territory. Thus, to grasp the changes that have taken place in the history of winemaking, we need to imagine Europe not as a collection of nation states but as a mosaic of wine regions which owe their existence to the efforts of vine growers, winemakers and resellers, as well as the relevant institutions, in response to the global challenges that the continent has faced in the last two centuries. The local scale adopted by the majority of the essays in this work makes it easier to highlight how certain wine regions developed in Portugal, Spain, Germany, Slovenia, Luxemburg and, above all, in Italy and France, which as world leaders in the sector have received the most attention from scholars.

One feature we find in the evolution of the majority of the wine regions examined in the two volumes is the passage from a production model based on the maximisation of output to one aimed at improving product quality. A range of factors contributed to this evolution, appearing at different times and in different ways in the regions considered. Among the most important of these was the modernisation of cultivation and manufacturing processes resulting from advances in the application of microbiology to winemaking and from technological innovations based on intensifying experimental and scientific research during the second industrial revolution. The abandonment of empirical techniques for more rational and specialised cultivation processes, such as the move from ancient indigenous cultivars to the grafting of American rootstocks more resistant to parasites, and the introduction of new vinification machinery enabled producers to combat the onslaught of the cryptogamic diseases that struck European vineyards

starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in some cases it allowed deep crisis to be turned into an opportunity for improvement. Two outstanding examples of this are the cases of Portugal, where the oidium epidemic of the 1850s ushered in new advances in viticulture and vinification processes (Conceição Andrade Martins and Ana Cardoso de Matos, vol. 1) and that of the Lower Moselle, where artisanal winemaking gave way in the nineteenth century to an industrialised system (Thomas Schuetz, vol. 1).

In the French region of Champagne, the replanting of vines after the late-nineteenth-century phylloxera epidemic was based on the selection of prestigious grape varieties like Pinot and Chardonnay, which were then disseminated throughout the Marne area thanks in part to the support of the Champagne Wine Association. This brought about an improvement in the quality of the sparkling wine which had long been produced in the area and led to a more decisive targeting of foreign markets by the end of the nineteenth century (Serge Wolikow, vol. 1). The innovating pioneers of winemaking were often large landowners and businessmen with financial expertise and substantial resources who kept up to date with the latest winemaking techniques by reading specialist publications, by attending fairs or through membership of scientific academies. For example, in 1872 Baron Bettino Ricasoli began making a high-quality Chianti on his Brolio estate in Tuscany that could compete with the best international wines. This was made possible through study and observation of French vinification methods and a scientific knowledge of the chemistry of wine (Silvia A. Conca Messina, vol. 2). The activity of Baron Ricasoli found imitators among the aristocratic and bourgeois elite of Tuscany and the neighbouring regions of Marche and Umbria. Nonetheless, these innovations did not have a strong enough impact to change the overall quality of the wines produced in these areas, which was generally mediocre until after the Second World War. The main obstacle to the diffusion of a new manufacturing paradigm was the prevalence in these parts of central Italy of the sharecropping system, which tended to favour

higher yields rather than quality (Luca Mocarelli and Manuel Vaquero Piñeiro, vol. 1).

The influence of agricultural management systems on the development of winemaking is also central to Llorenç Ferrer-Alòs's essay on Catalonia (vol. 2). Of the different types of tenant farming found in that region, the one that adapted best to change was the "concessió a plantar", a form of lease that allowed the leaseholder to reap long-term benefit from investments in the vines. From the turn of the twentieth century onwards, this system, which was widespread in the province of Tarragona, did much to encourage the development of tenant cooperatives that produced and sold wine, boosting the growth of Catalanian wine-making.

Elsewhere in Europe, too, cooperatives and consortia of producers and resellers played a crucial role in the sector's modernisation in many different ways. Association made it possible to overcome the constraints imposed by the limited economies of scale available to viticulturists and winemakers when measured against the large investments required by new technologies. Another benefit was access to information on the latest discoveries and techniques regarding wine, otherwise only available to large landowners and producers. Various cases illustrate this: certain parts of the North of Italy like eastern Lombardy (Paolo Tedeschi, vol. 1), southern Piedmont and the area of Pavia south of the Po river (Luciano Maffi, vol. 1), along with alpine areas like Tyrol and Valtellina, characterised by a substantial fragmentation of terrain (Claudio Besana and Andrea Locatelli, vol. 1).

Improvements in transport networks allowed isolated and peripheral areas to benefit from inclusion in expanded urban markets and stimulated the development of the winemaking sector. The case of Valle Peligna in Abruzzo is significant in this regard: a railway built in the late nineteenth century linked the town of Sulmona to the urban centres of Pescara and Rome, allowing Montepulciano wine to reach a larger potential market (Dario Dall'Osa, vol. 1).

Andrea Cafarelli's essay (vol. 1), with a focus on specialised publications

in Friuli, examines the dissemination of winemaking knowledge through agricultural bulletins published from the nineteenth century onwards and specialist magazines that began to appear after the Second World War. These publications gave an ever-wider readership of growers and producers access to the results of scientific research and testing, encouraging the emulation of increasingly advanced practices.

As in other sectors of the food and agriculture industry, foreign demand played an important part by spurring the supply of higher-quality products for more discriminating export markets, although in some cases dependence on foreign markets actually braked the emergence of high-end products. For example, France's growing demand for blending wines meant that large quantities had to be imported after France's own vines had fallen victim to phylloxera, inducing an increase in low-quality wine production in other countries, including Italy. Furthermore, Italy's dependence on the French market proved costly when the two countries broke off commercial relations after Italy introduced protectionist tariffs in 1887. Cases illustrating this situation can be found in Sicily, as described by Francesco Dandolo (vol. 2), and in Puglia, examined by Ezio Ritrovato (vol. 2).

The themes of terroir and typicity are treated in Olivier Jacquet's essay on Burgundy and Rachel Reckinger study on Luxembourg (both in vol. 2). Wine was the first product to benefit from legislative protection in the form of denomination of origin certification, which can be granted in recognition of a product's identification with a particular territory possessing specific geographical characteristics which cannot be reproduced elsewhere, sometimes in combination with long-standing manual techniques and practices. In any case, qualification for denomination of origin protection is never a foregone conclusion; it is always the result of the activity of institutions, viticulturists, producers and resellers in defence of their interests.

In an overall context that accorded priority to quality over quantity, the wines of the Languedoc examined by Stephane Le Bras (vol. 2)

appear to have followed the opposite trend. The high reputation of these wines before the 1870s declined throughout the following century after producers decided to respond to urban centres' growing demand for alcoholic drinks, and for wine in particular, by increasing their output, to the detriment of quality.

The synergy between business acumen and institutional interventions was important in the promotion of territory-based brands, as in the case of Bordeaux wine examined in the essay by Hubert Bonin (vol. 2). In a region with ancient winemaking traditions, stronger performance on foreign and domestic markets was achieved through a commercial strategy whereby, along with their more famous wines destined for export or for wealthier clients, producers also pushed the marketing of mid-range wines targeted at the growing number of less demanding drinkers from the middle and working classes. Small brands, along with the top names in the industry, benefitted from the 1905 law establishing strict rules to defend a territory's reputation against fraud. Institutions did not always foster improvements in the quality of wines. In Slovenia, for example, the nationalisation of winemaking businesses and the marginalisation of private enterprises under the communist regime after the Second World War led to an increase in the output of wine but not in its quality. A gradual improvement in quality only got under way in the 1980s, after private producers were granted more entrepreneurial freedom (Žarko Lazarević, vol. 1).

In the 1960s the European Economic Community introduced an important institutional mechanism in support of improvements to quality, the Common Agricultural Policy. This made a regulatory reference network available to member countries, compiled on the basis of winemaking knowledge in the most developed regions, and provided financial aid for its dissemination (Paolo Tedeschi and Stefanella Stranieri, vol. 2).

While we have only touched on some of the complex and wide-ranging themes covered by the essays, we can state with certainty that these two volumes on the history of wine contribute new pieces to

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what we hope will be an ever more detailed puzzle and no doubt will stimulate further historiographical interest in this sector.

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