

P. CLARK, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp.XVII-516

Peter Clark, who teaches social and economic history at the University of Leicester, is one of the most authoritative historians of towns and is one of the editors of the *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*.

The detailed picture that Clark provides about societies, associations and clubs in Great Britain from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century goes beyond what may at first appear as a history of fashions (including political and intellectual fashions) and customs. In actual fact, as the subtitle reveals, the book is a reconstruction of a very singular historical and national tradition which was reflected in all the juridical, political and cultural aspects of British society, a society which from its very origins developed its own characteristics due to its insularity.

As Clark himself explains, the book examines every type of association, ranging from political, philanthropic, cultural and artistic associations to professional associations and Masonic lodges. Clark traces their origins and growth under the Stuarts and the Hanoverians and goes on to examine their growth up until the twentieth century. In the last part of the book he considers the spread and influence of such associations in Britain's overseas territories and possessions.

Clark uses a wide range of sources existing in British and American libraries and archives and also raises questions related to methodology and the use of this material: "one is the nature of the documentation, voluminous in quantity but often poor in quality"; he writes that "many societies were informal or short-lived, yielding few documentary traces. Internal records - minute books and correspondence, along with other official papers - survive for no more than a tiny proportion(...) The bodies for which records survive in abundance tend to be rather exceptional - like the freemasons and chartered societies, more institutionalised and longer-lived than the norm (...) For many types of club and society, however, we have to rely on a pot-pourri of external sources: diaries and correspondence, sermons, ephemera like poems and tickets for the feast day, and the large volume of London, provincial and colonial papers".

Alongside these heuristic issues, Clark addresses the fundamental question about the definition of what he refers to as "voluntary associations", showing that various names were given to these bodies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: "companies (...), sodalities, academies, fraternities and societies" and even "corporations" and "chartered companies" (those, that is, enjoying royal privileges). Later, the term club was added, referring to "a society of men agreeing to meet according to a scheme of orders under a slight penalty to promote trade and friendship".

Clark's investigation, however, goes beyond issues related to mere

definition. It sets out to trace the ancient origins of these voluntary type associations. While "clubs and societies became one of the most distinctive social and cultural institutions of Georgian Britain", and their growth was especially linked to the early modern period starting from the Glorious Revolution, in actual fact Clark argues that "the origins of the movement are considerably earlier" and "their advent as a major social institution remains obscure".

Clark acknowledges that the academies and associations in continental Europe had little influence on British clubs and associations and were not a model for them since "Italian academies tended to be personalized, revolving around a particular aristocratic patron – a far cry from the English pattern of collective sociability. French-style state academies (...) are absent from the British scene"; the same could be said of Germany where, although political and cultural groups and associations linked to the rising middle classes existed, these were under state control; all these countries, moreover, were characterised by the continued absence of freedom of the press.

Great Britain, on the other hand, in this respect was one of the freest countries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed, Clark's whole reconstruction only re-endorses the image of triumphant sociability, free from government control, quoting Samuel Pepy's Diary and Locke's thought or Samuel Johnson's works.

Clarke continues: "We are to consider how far the decline of the role of central government and spread of religious pluralism help to explain the exceptional vitality of British associations (...). The pattern of associational growth was itself a social process, serving as an indispensable ingredient in the complex reworking of British society during the early modern period. Nonetheless, a series of powerful secular forces provided much (...) for the advance of voluntary societies (...) helping, in some measure, to distinguish it from continental countries. Crucial among these factors was the quickening pace of urban growth after the English Revolution (...), the role of the State and civic government, and the influence of the press".

Nor should we forget the mutually fruitful relationship between the associational movement and urbanisation and industrialisation.

The only limitation in Clark's study is his desire at all costs to identify an originating model for the myriad of groups and societies that arose in Britain in the early modern period (from literary cafes to Masonic lodges). It is almost as if he wishes to bestow upon them a certificate of paternity. Thus in the quite broad comparative analysis he carries out in the introduction to the book he goes as far back to the sodalities of ancient Greece and Rome and concludes: "Given that continental associations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had only a limited effect in stimulating and shaping the development of British clubs and societies, then we must look elsewhere, to native antecedents, for their pedigree. Likely candidates here are the religious

confraternities (or fraternities) and trade guilds which proliferated in late medieval England, as elsewhere in Europe (...).

It is surprising that in his wish to systematise Clark does not seem to realise that his learned references to ancient institutions, which were based on strictly hierarchical juridical structures and institutions (both ecclesiastical and lay), hardly fit in with the fluid and dynamic picture he so skilful portrays.

The evolution of a society that came into being with the Magna Carta and had produced the Social Contract and Locke's *epistola de tolerantia*, *Habeus Corpus* and the Bill of Rights, will perhaps find in its own historical origins a suitable answer to the question and the real origins of the associational spirit of its social orders and groups.

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M. DE LUCIA, *Viaggi in Europa. Vie di comunicazione e turismo nello sviluppo economico europeo*, Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2002, pp. 170.

This little bedside book is for readers who are curious about the history of travel. Mario de Lucia has divided it into three chapters: 1): The Importance of Travel and Tourism in the European Economy from the Eighteenth Century until the Early Twentieth Century, a) Traditional Tourist Attractions; 2): The Improvement in Road, Rail and Sea Links in European Economic History and in the Development of Tourism in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, a) Carriages, Waggons and Stagecoaches. Travellers and Passengers in the Preindustrial Age, b) The Age of Industrialisation. Transport and the New Sources of Energy, Railways, Electric Locomotives, Funiculars and Cog Railways. Sea Routes; 3): Particular Sources and Testimonies for a History of Nineteenth-Century Tourism in Europe, a) Travelling through Germany, Italy and Switzerland.

Mario de Lucia decided to focus on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "Travel, more or less a tourist interest, begins to feature after the great geographical discoveries and after the discoveries of other famous explorers and navigators who first drew maps of known lands. From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards, travel was inspired by the desire for adventure and for discovering new worlds. Some travel was prompted by the desire to conquer new lands, to occupy the territories of enemy states or to visit the Pope or an emperor to obtain favours and privileges. However, in this sense, travel has nothing to do with tourism (...) but has political and strategic importance: it is not really motivated by tourist interests, by the desire to be acquainted with and the pleasure of visiting new

lands for cultural needs." However, one can not help thinking of the sixteenth-century *Journal de voyage en Italie* by Michel de Montaigne.

De Lucia's very straightforward handling of the subject aims to be halfway between an easily-read, popular book and the need to combine historico-economic aspects and sociological connotations in order to deal on a general level, without any claim to exhaust the subject, with such a complex issue as "travel" and the rise of "tourism". Recently this subject has deliberately occasioned some practical considerations e.g. *Viaggio e viaggiatori nell'età del turismo. Per una riqualificazione dell'offerta turistica nelle città d'arte*, edited by Margherita Ciacci, Florence, Olschki, 2000.

The understanding of travel in the "tourist" sense has its famous antecedent in the eighteenth-century tradition of the "Grand Tour" which served as an apprenticeship for the educated gentleman: de Lucia explains that in the eighteenth century travel became a sort of "coercion", a social "necessity", related in particular to the political and economic supremacy of a nation like Britain, which deemed it an imperative for the scions of the most famous families to visit the major European nations in order to reconstruct "their own cultural, literary, philosophical or even political heritage".

"Other countries", explains de Lucia, "imitated the English grand tours and, with the improvement in means of communication, the eighteenth century saw the development of tourism that was always for the élite, but was more widespread in Europe". And it is this aspect which is the subject of the second and densest chapter where the issues of roads, transport and its development are handled, with some statistical data and colourful observations.

The growth of land and water transport could not offer anything new in a current of research which has been continuously studied and updated. However, de Lucia's examination of literary sources and travel literature that is useful in reconstructing the development over the years of the tourist phenomenon is more original. He stresses that the fundamental problem for the researcher on the history of tourism in Europe lies in "choosing the most significant documents and travel testimonies, and, with the aid of other sources, trying to understand what attraction a landscape, a monument, a city, a monastery, a lake could hold for tourists in the past (...) and so, (...) in order to understand the birth and the development of tourism in Europe (...), we must refer to the documentation made up of official data, if such a thing existed at the time, but above all, we must refer to works of literature, such as diaries, correspondence, chronicles (...) that can bear witness, even though sometimes indirectly and incompletely, to travel experiences and "adventures".

To this end, de Lucia deliberately shelves the testimonies of great and too well-known writers, leaving more room for the travel books and descriptions of "minor" authors, probably because they are "fresher" and their descriptions do not have literary filters.

It is, however, regrettable that in half the cases (with abundant quotations)

these writings are not first-hand sources, whereas the author could have referred to a great deal of lesser known literature, even if only Italian literature (for example, the ironic *Viaggio di un ignorante, ossia ricetta per gli ipocondriaci* by Giovanni Rajberti from Milan, published in 1857).

Since de Lucia explicitly admits that he has supplied merely a very essential bibliography because of the vastness of the material available, it is to be hoped that, in a broader re-examination of the subject, he will use recent critical editions on the subject of travel and the "curiosity" of travelling (to mention only a few: *L'Egitto di Amalia Nizzoli. Lettura del diario di una viaggiatrice della prima metà dell'Ottocento*, edited by A. Vanzan, Bologna, 1996; Stendhal, *Piccola guida per il viaggio in Italia (1828). Partendo da Parigi e rientrando per la Svizzera e Strasburgo*, edited by A. Bottacin, Milan, 1998; J. Dryden jr., *Un viaggio in Sicilia e a Malta nel 1700-1701*, edited by R. Portale, La Spezia, 1999; C. De Seta, *Vedutisti e viaggiatori in Italia tra Settecento e Ottocento*, Turin, 1999; G. De Pascale, *Scrittori in viaggio. Narratori e poeti italiani del Novecento in giro per il mondo*, Turin, 2001), and that he also makes reference to the activities and the publications of the *Centro interuniversitario di ricerche sul viaggio in Italia* (CIRVI) - the Interuniversity Research Centre on Travel in Italy - and of its French counterpart, the *Centre de recherche sur la littérature des voyages* (CRLV)- the Research Centre on Travel Literature.

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P. DIAZ MORLAN, *Los Ybarra, una dinastia de empresarios. 1801-2001*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2001, pp. 378.

Business history is one of the most developed branches of economic history today. At least since the time when Werner Sombart and Max Weber wrote their classic books, if not before, there has been a deep interest in the study of the way entrepreneurs have influenced the growth of modern capitalist economies in order to discover the seemingly infinite examples of entrepreneurial behaviour, the basic rules followed by businessmen in their accumulation and investment process.

Seen from the Spanish perspective, there has been another important aspect which helps us to understand more clearly this interest. As all those familiar with the history of the country will surely know, it has been very common to describe the economic history of Spain in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century as a classic example of failure and backwardness. Although it would take too long to explain all the factors usually invoked by historians to explain this failure, it should be remembered that the

lack of a strong and influential entrepreneurial class, sometimes considered as the result of the cultural and behavioural constraints imposed by the Catholic Counter Reformation, has always been seen as one important factor in the problems of the Spanish economy.

In recent years this view has undergone serious revision. Many works and articles have convincingly shown the existence of an important group of dynamic entrepreneurs in the country, and "Los Ybarra" can be considered one important step in this direction.

The Ybarra family was one of the most privileged groups in the Basque and Spanish economies during the last two centuries and it would not be exaggerated to compare this dynasty of entrepreneurs to other influential European families, such as the famous Italian Agnelli or the German Krupps. The fortune of the dynasty originated in the trade with America, through the northern port of Bilbao, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century (chapters 2 and 3), but it would be a mistake to think that their activities were exclusively focused on the rich American trade. Since their beginnings, the Ybarras tried to diversify their interests, so in the same period they also were owners of rich iron ore mines in Somorrostro, near Bilbao, selling the mineral ore obtained in them to the many bloomeries scattered all over the Basque country.

The ownership of these mines was the one of the keys to the economic success of the family in the second half of the century. Their accommodation with the political and legal framework was another. During the Early Modern Period the Basque country had been a free-trade area, but this privileged position changes after the liberal reforms introduced to Spain in the 1830s and 1840s, and the Ybarras soon understood that they had to adapt to the new circumstances, something that they did in due course with remarkable success.

In the new context which arose after the liberal reforms, the best business prospects for Basque entrepreneurs lay, first, in the manufacture of iron and, second, in the sales of mineral iron ore to the metallurgical centres of Southern Spain and, especially, Great Britain. If we remember that the Ybarra were the owners of rich iron mines, it is easy to see that they were better placed than other Basque businessmen to face this new phase. Of course, this involved the transition from a purely merchantile activity to a more complex one, in which the manufacture of iron would have a privileged role, and the history of the Ybarra family in the central years of the nineteenth century could be described as the constant search for a viable way of doing this (chapter 3 and 4).

As for the first aspect, the Ybarras always showed a clear interest in the manufacture of iron, with the idea of utilising their own iron ore. It says a lot about their entrepreneurial talent and dynamism that they adopted the Bessemer technology in order to produce steel at an early date, promoting the foundation of "Altos Hornos de Bilbao" in 1882, undoubtedly one of the most important and famous firms not only of the Spanish metal industry, but of the country's economy (chapter 5). As for the second, the Ybarras never forgot

their mining origins, and they preserved a strong interest in the sector at least until the middle years of the twentieth century. Knowing the high demand for iron ore created by the Industrial Revolution, in 1873 and 1876, they leased some of their mines to two foreign companies (the "Orconera Iron Ore Company Limited, based in London, and the "Soci t  Anonyme Franco-Belge des Mines de Somorrostro", based in Paris). These contracts were highly advantageous and, thanks to them, most members of the family obtained substantial profits which enabled them to enjoy all the pleasure of the bourgeois "fin de si cle" lifestyle (chapter 7 and 9).

But not all the Ybarras opted for the comfortable life of the rentier, and some of them, such as Tom s Zubir a Ybarra and Fernando Ybarra Revilla, played a prominent role in some of the more remarkable entrepreneurial projects of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth, as the foundation of shipyards ("Sociedad Espa ola de Construcciones Navales") and electrical companies. The strategy followed by both businessmen was very similar to that adopted by other Spanish and European entrepreneurial dynasties in the same period. As their ancestors had previously done in the first decades of the nineteenth century, both Fernando and Tom s successfully tried to diversify their investments, and they also established close links among all the companies of the group, so, for example, the iron and steel produced by Altos Hornos was the input used by the the "Sociedad Espa ola de Construcciones Navales". Obviously, the hegemonic position the Ybarras enjoyed in Spanish industry was the best platform for launching into the new sectors created at the turn of the century, like the electrical, and the chemical, industries, and this was another important key to their success (chapter 7).

It can, indeed, be said that the years between 1891 and 1930 were the Golden Age of the Ybarra family. After nearly a century of history, they controlled many of the most important Spanish metal, shipbuilding, chemical and electrical companies while preserving, at the same time, their strong and traditional presence in iron mining, and to this we should add that they were also well placed in some of the most important banks of the country. Without denying that this was the result of the managerial abilities of the most dynamic members of the family, it would be wrong to forget the outstanding ability showed by the Ybarras in forging close relationships with the successive Spanish governments of the period (with the notable exception of the Republican one in the years 1931-1936) which was another basic factor in their long run economic success, as the author convincingly shows. In fact, the Ybarras were consistently aligned with the liberal side during the Carlist Wars of the first half of the nineteenth century, and then they used his wealth and connections to support the government of Alfonso XIII's reign as head of the monarchist Maurista party in the province, something that was repaid with a set of economic and social policies well suited to the economic interests of the family (chapter 8).

But the heaviest identification of the Ybarras with the Spanish government came with Franco's dictatorship, who promoted and defended the interests of Basque heavy industry through the adoption of protective policies maintained throughout the period and a close control of the workforce. Rather ironically, there is some ground to suggest that the problems of the family in the last decades of the twentieth century originated in this same period. Well cushioned under the secure umbrella of the Francoist regime, it seems that they forgot some of the lessons taught by their ancestors, such as, for instance, the advantages of having a diversified investment structure. Around 1970, the economic interests of the family were dangerously concentrated in those sectors (metal and chemical industries and shipyards) which suffered most from the economic crisis of the middle years of the decade, and this explains the difficulties that many members of the group had to face in this period.

After reading this book, it can be said that the author has given us insights which help us to have a better understanding of the role played by the Ybarra family in Spanish industrialization and, in a broader sense, of the figure of the entrepreneur. Of course, it should be remembered that, as P. Díaz remarks, not all Ybarras were entrepreneurs. In fact, it would be more appropriate to describe most members of the dynasty as rentiers who enjoyed a comfortable "dolce far niente" thanks to the incomes obtained from the companies of the group (in this respect, the importance of mining is only too evident). Having said this, it is undeniable that in every generation of the family there were a handful of Ybarras who ranked among the most important entrepreneurs of the country. These included José Antonio de Ybarra and Fernando de Ybarra Revilla, who understood the possibilities opened by the new technologies and were ready to exploit them, even if this meant that they had to face the risks of introducing new methods, as the adoption of Bessemer technology shows. To conclude, probably the most important merit of the book lies in the fact that its author has convincingly revealed the close links between economics and politics. It would not be unfair to say that, because they were entrepreneurs, the most talented and gifted members of the family had to be politicians at the same time, so many of them played an important political role in the troubled political life of the Basque country and Spain in the last century. They always valued the need to have a good relationship with the political power and, in fact, they showed a remarkable ability to establish profitable relationships with nearly every Spanish government and regime, no matter about its ideology.

As a result, the book under review is more than a well-written history of the Ybarra family but it also contains an accurate description of the origins of the modern capitalist Spanish economy and a convincing view of the way politics affects economics which throws new light on to some important problems of the country's history, like the birth and development of Basque nationalism and the origins of Franco's dictatorship. Taking all these undeniable merits into

account, we can say that "Los Ybarra" will be highly relevant for all those interested in Spanish economic and political history.

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A. Di Vittorio, *Tra mare e terra. Aspetti economici e finanziari della Repubblica di Ragusa in età moderna*. Cacucci, Bari, 2001, pp.VII-221

Di Vittorio is one of the few Western economic historians to have studied the economic history of Ragusa-Dubrovnik in any depth and consistently and with noteworthy results. In his first work on Ragusa's history which came out in 1983, *Finanza e moneta a Ragusa nell'età della crisi*¹, we find the two fundamental ideas that have characterised his subsequent studies: firstly that of considering Ragusa's economy not only in relation to the Mediterranean but in relation to the whole of Europe; secondly showing that Ragusa was not immune to international developments, taking into due consideration, of course, its size and circumstances. In this respect, Di Vittorio's approach to the so-called Seventeenth-Century Crisis is revealing. While he acknowledges the seriousness of the crisis, in the case of Ragusa he believes that it was not a generalised crisis but rather a succession of periods of depression and recovery.

As well as being engaged directly in the reconstruction of Ragusa's economic history in the early modern period, Di Vittorio has been active in promoting research and knowledge about the subject. In 1988 he organised a big conference on the role and functions of Ragusa from the middle ages to the early modern period² which was attended by the leading Italian and Yugoslav historians of Ragusa, including A. Tenenti and B. Krekic, who had not resided in his native country for many years. The conference addressed major issues like agriculture, credit, shipping, trade, commercial relations between Ragusa and Mediterranean countries and towns, foreign exchange, relations between Ragusa's population and Slavs and Sephardic Jews, and science and technology, with many original contributions, including one by Di Vittorio himself on Ragusa's economy which added new data and considerations to the pioneering work by P. Sardella.³

The book under review carries on a long and unbroken tradition of study and research. It brings together a collection of essays which have appeared over time and have been published in various places and for various occasions

¹ Giannini editore, (Napoli 1983), pp. XIX - 284.

² A. Di Vittorio (ed.), *Ragusa e il Mediterraneo. Ruolo e funzioni di una Repubblica marinara tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna*, (Cacucci, Bari 1990), pp. XII -410.

³ P. Sardella, *Nouvelles et spéculations à Venise au debut du XVI.e siècle*, (Paris 1948).

but which are now impossible to find. Strictly speaking it cannot be said (neither is this Di Vittorio's intention) that the book is a complete history of Ragusa's economy. Indeed, it tends to focus mainly on the economic and financial relations deriving from Ragusa's special geographical situation, enclosed by the sea and the land, but it does so from many different perspectives. It covers all the centuries in the early modern period with one or more chapters dedicated to each century which are all based on unpublished materials and taking account of the extant literature on the subject. Each successive chapter shows how the predominant sector of the economy changed from one century to the next.

In the first two chapters maritime and commercial interests prevail, while in the subsequent two chapters the emphasis is on foreign investments and the financial policy and role of intermediation played by the Republic in western and eastern relations, with the protection of the Ottoman Empire. Another two chapters show the contribution made by the islands to Ragusa's economic development, including the salt-producing islands. The penultimate chapter addresses an issue of great interests: the city's economic recovery in the last few years of the eighteenth century which derived from the expansion of Ragusa's merchant navy and international trade from one side of the Mediterranean to the other, this time through Leghorn, Genoa and Marseilles and led to an increase in foreign investments. The book ends with a detailed survey of Serbo-Croat literature on the subject of Ragusa's maritime history.

In conclusion, the book provides a significant and stimulating picture of developments in Ragusa's history with much data, comparisons and ideas for further research and will certainly be invaluable not only to scholars interested in Ragusa but also to those interested in the maritime and commercial history of the Mediterranean in the early modern period.

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A. ESTEBAN ESTRINGANA, *Guerra y finanzas en los Países Bajos Católicos. De Farnesio a Spínola (1592-1630)*, Madrid, Labirinto, 2002, pp.319.

The "Military Revolution" is one of the most interesting topics of the early modern period history. A long list of book and articles have analyzed questions such as, for instance, the adoption of new tactics and weapons and the recruitment of soldiers and officers and, from a more general perspective, the relationships between the development of modern armies and the growth of the modern state have also attracted a lot of interest.

The Army of Flanders, first analyzed by G. Parker in his seminal "The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road" deserves to be considered as one of the most

efficient military corps of the period. Thanks to this works of this author and others like Fernando Gonzáles de León, we have a deep understanding of this army, its components, tactics and his command, and in "Guerra y finanzas..." A. Esteban tries to improve our knowledge of the topic through the analysis of an aspect whose importance was already noted by Parker: the financial apparatus built to provide the Army of Flanders with the funds it needed from 1592 to 1630 and to control its expenditures.

During the years covered by the book, the Habsburg troops deployed in the Low Countries had to face a basic problem: the funds transferred by the Crown from Castile and Italy to finance them were never sufficient, so from 1592 a continuous flow of reforms unsuccessfully tried to address the problem.

As A. Esteban convincingly shows, the Madrid government had a clear and sound perception of the roots of this. First of all, it should be admitted that the main difficulty lay in the fact that the Army of Flanders would have probably needed bigger transfers of funds from the Castilian capital. Of course this would have been familiar to most military commanders at any period, but, given the complexities of Habsburg foreign policy –a good example of strategy overstretching- it was virtually impossible to find a solution. This forced the Crown to devise new ways to control expenditure and to ensure that the money sent to Flanders was going to be used properly: government ministers soon realised that to achieve this it was necessary to face two problems.

In the first place, it is well known that the Spanish Crown depended on short-term debt contracts (*asientos*) accepted by foreign lenders (*asentistas*) to finance the Army of Flanders. To attract the *asentistas*, the Crown mortgaged its fiscal incomes and, in turn, the *asentistas* lent the money, transferring it to Flanders thanks to the use of bills of exchange.

From the perspective of the Army of Flanders, this technique had a serious flaw: instead of transferring the annual funds destined for the army in a single operation, the *asentistas* apportioned the money lent in monthly payments (*mesadas*). This created serious difficulties for the financial department of the army, because the rate of its expenditure was unevenly distributed across the year. In months of military activity, when a battle or campaign was waged, the expenditures were well above the monthly *mesada*, and the financial officers of the army had to borrow the money from the Amberes financiers: the *paguistas*. This gave rise to a new type of short-term debt (*anticipaciones*), with high interest rates (30% rates were not uncommon), so at the end of the period a sizeable part of the *mesadas* was not used to finance military activities, but to pay interest to the *paguistas* (see pages 49, 212 and 284).

Second, it should be remembered that the political status of the Spanish Low Countries introduced serious difficulties. In an effort to consolidate Habsburg rule over the kingdom and, at the same time, to create the conditions for a possible withdrawal of Spanish troops, in 1598 Felipe II abdicated from his post as King of the Low Countries, nominating his daughter, Isabel Clara

Eugenia, and his son in law, Archduke Albert of Habsburg, as regents of the Low Countries. To help the couple, the Army of Flanders was maintained in the country and during the first years of the century it was commanded by Archduke Albert himself, who also controlled the administration of the funds sent from Castile. The instability of this arrangement was clear: the regents depended on an army they did not pay, and to this it should be added that, as the mutinies of 1600, 1601 or 1603 and the military stalemate of the period showed too well, the doubts of some Spanish ministers on the ability of Albert to fulfill his military and administrative tasks were too well founded (chapter two).

The financial history of the Army of Flanders during these years could be described as the search for solutions to the problems we have just mentioned.

To put an end to the expensive *anticipos*, an ambitious reformist project was devised in 1627 (pp 230-39) with the idea of replacing the *paguistas* with local businessmen who would provide cheaper credit. Yet this effort was doomed to failure. The old *paguistas* had obtained substantial profits from the *anticipaciones* so, understandably, they did not have any interest in this scheme. If we remember that these *paguistas*, closely related to the *asentistas*, were those who paid the bills of exchange sent from Madrid, it is easy to see that the Habsburg Crown needed their cooperation to keep the Army of Flanders as an effective military corps, and this explains the failure of the reform.

More successful were the measures introduced to ensure that the Army of Flanders was going to be well commanded in the field and its funds well administered. In 1605 the famous Ambrosio de Spinola was appointed Maestro de Campo General, so he received the military command of the Army and the control of all its financial affairs. This was satisfactory both for Albert and the Habsburg government, especially because Spinola, member of a well-known family of Genoese bankers, could use his personal wealth and connections to pay the Army.

There is little doubt that, if from a military point of view the arrival of Spinola was a success, the same cannot be said from the financial perspective. His control of the finances of the Army was used by the new *maestro de campo* to buy the favour and support of soldiers and officers in ways that were practically fraudulent (chapter III), so in 1627 the costs of maintaining the Army had risen, and it was evident that the military and financial powers concentrated in Spinola's hands were so big that he could be compared more to an autonomous and nearly independent military viceroy than to an ordinary military commander. To prevent this, in 1627 the Madrid government decided to reduce the size of the Army, cutting the wages paid to its members.

Considering all this, we think that the reading of "Guerra..." will be a great help for all those interested in the European and Spanish history in the Early Modern Period. Among the many relevant merits of the book we would like to mention three:

First, through her detailed analysis of the financial organization of the Army of Flanders, A. Esteban give us insights for a broader view of the Spanish presence in the Low Countries. After reading the book we have a better understanding of Archduke Albert, Isabel Clara Eugenia and Ambrosio Spinola, and the complexities of the policies they pursued. It would not be unfair to say, then, that "Guerra y Finanzas" is more than just an ordinary economic history book.

Second, the author has convincingly shown the importance of some financial techniques such as the *anticipaciones*, which were relatively unknown until the present. The pages where she describes these techniques are among the most interesting of the book, and the same can be said about chapter four, where she studies the intention of replacing the *paguistas* with a system of public banks in which small Flemish businessmen would provide cheaper credit to the army. When we consider that, as A. Dubet has recently shown, similar projects were seriously discussed in Castile and in Italy in the same years, it is obvious that the idea of erecting a public bank system as a way of improving the Crown's financial position was a basic part of the reformist schemes which circulated through the Habsburg Monarchy in the first decades of the seventeenth century and which would probably deserve further research.

Third and last, according to an old historiographical tradition, the history of the seventeenth-century Spanish bureaucracy and administration is usually described in terms of decay and failure, but the view offered by A. Esteban does not fit well into this model. As the book shows, the Spanish government always had a clear perception of the problems of the Army of Flanders, and the plans proposed to solve them were both sound and rational. If the project of replacing the *paguistas* by a new debt system based on public banks was a failure, this was due to the Spanish Crown's basic incapacity to create a healthy public credit system during the period, but it should be admitted then that the same problem affected even the Colbertist French government, usually considered as one of the best examples of the so called modern state. In the same way, it is true that the cuts in the expenditure of the Army of Flanders adopted in 1627 reduced its military efficiency and awakened the strong opposition of both officers and soldiers, but if the purpose of these measures was to weaken A. Spinola and to increase Madrid's control over its troops, it must be recognised that both objectives were achieved. Spinola went away in 1628 and the Army of Flanders was never led by a Spanish Wallerstein. It was not a bad result after all, and one would dare to say that this might have been looked on with some envy by the Viennese relatives of the Spanish Habsburgs.

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L. FRANGIONI, *Chiedere e ottenere. L'approvvigionamento di prodotti di successo della bottega Datini di Avignone nel XIV secolo*, Opus Libri, Firenze, 2002, pp.187

This book uses the rich store of documents held at the Datini Archive in Prato, once the undisputed realm of Federigo Melis and now directed with diligence by Prof. Giampiero Nigro. The Archive is also the venue for the *Settimane internazionali di Storia economica* which for the last thirty years or so has attracted from all over the world the most eminent scholars and specialists of the themes that are annually discussed there. Yet quite apart from the documents held at the Datini Archive, Frangioni has also consulted the vast bibliography on trade in the late middle ages and related technology which has been built up over the years in Italy and abroad, a bibliography to which Frangioni herself has contributed.

The subject of the book is the "successful Italian products" traded on the international market, products characterised by the high quality of the raw material used, a distinguishing feature, the use of a particular method of production or by a very prestigious certification of origin. Not all of the successful commodities were luxury items. During the period under study, spanning from the second half of the fourteenth century to the first decade of the fifteenth century, an Italian product might have been considered successful because it had been manufactured in a famous locality, or for its intrinsic merit, or for the master craftsman who had made it, or for its brand name. In other words, it was not necessarily its greater or lesser cost which accounted for its popularity. In fact, in order to promote exports, Italian artisans had to identify first and foremost which were the markets for luxury goods and which were the markets for low cost goods and also the reasons for such demand.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part, apart from a philological analysis of the sources and a reference to the system of currencies, weights and measures in force in Avignon in the period under study, there is also a glossary and a description of the role that the three "workshops" opened in Avignon by the Datini played in the town's business system. The issue regarding the nature of successful products is also addressed, focusing on the master craftsmen, the variety of products, imitations and counterfeits, and brands. Frangioni then considers methods of production, dwelling on fustians in the cotton sector and on metallurgical products, in particular on the manufacture of mail and basinetts, without forgetting the work tools. One chapter deals with the exportation of products from the Avignon workshops to Italy with mention of the routes taken to reach the destination.

In the second part, Frangioni chronologically reconstructs the variety of Italian products which Aragonese shops imported from Italy, most of them belonging to the armaments sector, although they also included textiles (tablecloths, cloths, barber's towels, coloured cotton balls, fustians, green, black, blue, vermilion and white thread), hats (black for chaplains), paper products (small, medium and large sheets, goat paper etc). The detailed list of products

exported from Italy with the related quantities imported, is included in the appendix.

The Datini decision to open up "shops" in Avignon was not accidental. It foreshadowed its business strategies which were all directed to the West, as is shown by the subsequent opening of businesses in Pisa, Genoa, Barcelona, Majorca and Valencia. Moreover Avignon was a papal see and thus a commercial centre for the whole of France, and until the Barcelona shop was open, for the whole of Catalonia too. As Frangioni points out, Avignon had attracted numerous artisans skilled in the manufacture of metals, hides, leather and wood who came from many different European cities which included Florence, Prato, Pisa, Milan, Venice, Bruges, Paris as well as large and small French towns. Therefore it was "one of the most interesting markets in Europe for high quality goods and products".

In the Datini "shops" in Avignon, not only locally or Italian produced goods were sold but also products manufactured in Britain, Flanders, Hungary, France and Catalonia. The "shops" operated on both a wholesale and retail basis. As well as wholesale business they also served ordinary people. From the documents it emerges that wayfarers, women, countrymen, footmen and "Jews" went into the shops to buy needles, scissors, nails and even some luxury items such as paintings on wood in fine gold. The flow of customers was considerable and the book-keeping papers reveal that the number reached about a thousand. The range of goods on offer was such that all you had to do was to ask in order to get what you wanted ("*chiedere*" per "*ottenere*"). Yet the demand was such that often supply was unable to satisfy it in a short time, especially considering the long time involved in production without machinery. Thus in many cases, despite the range of goods on sale in the shops, asking did not mean obtaining what you wanted, a fact which nonetheless testifies to the huge success of Datini and Italian products.

In the light of what we have been saying it is evident that this book is of interest to those studying medieval economic and industrial history, both French and Italian and also for those interested in the stimulus to trade given by the papal presence in Avignon. The book confirms, therefore – after the impressive bibliography published by Frangioni a few years ago on guilds and professional groups from Roman times to the Fascist era and beyond, consisting of around nine thousand entries¹ – that L. Frangioni is emerging as one of the leading scholars, among the former pupils of Federigo Melis, for her commitment, assiduity, and the range of her research as well as for the originality of her work and its results. In this respect, perhaps better than anyone else she holds high the brilliant tradition of her much lamented teacher.

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¹ L. Frangioni, *Corporazioni e dintorni*, saggio bibliografico sulle corporazioni e i gruppi professionali dall'età romana alla fascista (e oltre), Opus Libri, Firenze, 1998, pp.VI-519.

S. LUCONI, *Little Italies e New Deal. La coalizione rooseveltiana e il voto italo-americano a Filadelfia e Pittsburgh*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2002, pp.254.

Stefano Luconi is a historian who has specialised in the electoral behaviour of Italo-Americans in the United States from 1918 onwards (*Teorie del comportamento di voto e crisi della democrazia elettorale negli Stati Uniti dal secondo dopoguerra ad oggi*, Florence, 1999). Luconi's latest book examines a hitherto unexplored aspect of the Italian political "presence" during the time of the New Deal, and is based on a huge number of publications, both Italian and non-Italian, and on a large number of archive sources, for the most part American (apart from the Central State Archives in Rome). Until there is evidence to the contrary, this constitutes a substantial guarantee of scientific reliability.

The book is the continuation and the development of Luconi's construction of an Italo-American identity at a social and political level, from the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century (*From Paesani to White Ethnics: the Italian Experience in Philadelphia*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2001), and during the Fascist period (*La "diplomazia parallela": il regime fascista e la mobilitazione politica degli italo-americani*, Milan, 2000) with the rise of Generoso Pope, the subject of another piece of research by Luconi. At a very early age, Pope emigrated from the province of Benevento to the United States where he not only became the owner of one of the biggest building-material industries, but also founded *Il progresso italo-americano*, the Italian-language newspaper with the greatest circulation in New York, which had considerable influence on the formation of an Italo-American electorate. This electorate had at first had nationalist connotations due to the propaganda of the emigrant ex-servicemen during the First World War (cf., for example, the recent article by Matteo Pretelli, *Fasci italiani e comunità italo-americane: un rapporto difficile, 1921-1929* in *Giornale di storia contemporanea*, 2001, 1, pp. 112-140), but during the 1930s it took on markedly American-born Italian characteristics. The new Italo-American identity was regarded favourably by a bunch of Fascist consular officers, who were not so keen on maintaining a solid national identity through the Italian Fascist political groups abroad but who wanted to create an Italian community which, albeit generally sympathetic to the regime, supported by cultural activities and press campaigns, took out American citizenship in order to have greater means of pressure on the American government with regard to Italy's interests, by means of an appropriate lobby.

The lobby was made up of the so-called *prominenti*, those Italian emigrants of humble origin whom Richard Juliani, in his research on Philadelphia (*Building Little Italy. Philadelphia's Italians before Mass Migration*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), one of the two cities examined by Luconi, defined "ambitious men who successfully pursued wealth and acquired some prestige and power", such as, for example, Pope. According to Juliani, the *prominenti* "converted economic achievements into instruments of political influence and

control that granted them prominence and power within the immigrant community".

These are issues that have already been dealt with in, for example, Cannistraro's research on the relationship between Italo-Americans and Fascism. But Luconi intends to disassociate himself from the prevalent historiographical trend (especially the American trend and that of researchers of Italian origin) by openly exposing the deficiencies he discovered in published research on Italo-American political experience. In the preface, Luconi clarifies that, instead of favouring a vision starting from the bottom, "writing history from the bottom up (...), directing research towards examining which way the electorate voted", the most recent line of American historiography on class, race and ethnic groups has led to a boom in reconstructions of the careers of some successful politicians belonging to the Italo-American community and to studies of their political leadership in general". Luconi warns the reader of the risk that "by focusing on the so-called *prominenti* we are lead more or less implicitly to identifying the way the members of the Italo-American community voted with the positions of their representatives".

With statistical evidence, this was not at all the case, judging from Luconi's analyses. For example, he brings evidence to prove that in the specimen cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in the 1920s the Italo-American vote on issues such as prohibition and immigration restriction actually determined totally opposite political results: a Republican majority in 1926 and a Democratic majority in 1928. Luconi goes on to state that in the 1950s "the social and economic difficulties which still plagued many Italo-Americans (...) contributed (...) to a large number of electors' depending on the strongest party organisation in their city". Before the First World War, the electorate of Italian origin had cast very few votes, but in the post-war period it formed connections with Republican favouritism, and in the 1930s it constituted "a fundamental component of that electoral coalition made up of agricultural workers, unionised industrial workers and ethnic minorities" which was responsible for the victory of the Democratic candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt in the presidential elections of 1932. This meant that, before the New Deal, it had been the social conditions of immigrants which had fostered the vote in exchange for favours and therefore the triumph of the Republican organizational machine, just as, according to Luconi, the later Democratic victories in Philadelphia and in Pittsburgh in the 1930s were due "not only to the consequences of the depression and the advantages the Italo-Americans obtained from the New Deal legislation, but also to increased political recognition of the Italo-American community by Democratic party organisers in both cities".

This idea of a basic electorate which, all things considered, was active, albeit inevitably prompted and conditioned by local political situations and manoeuvres, enables Luconi to demolish another "traditional" interpretation that, not unjustly, was connected with the identification of abstentionism. This had been a

characteristic feature of the first generation of immigrants. A scanty knowledge of the English language and the American political system, together with the initial decision not to acquire American citizenship in the hope of going back to Italy when they had made their fortune, had contributed to keeping the Italians, unlike other minorities such as the Irish, away from voting and taking part in politics.

Luconi explains: "Although political apathy and abstentionism were undeniable and may have made Italo-American political experience seem an area of research which was anything but fruitful, specialists in ethnic history have contributed to accentuating Italo-American disinterest in elections". This was due to a particular interpretation of the issue on the part of American sociology (in particular Edward Banfield) in the 1950s: the idea of "amoral familism" which held that the average Italo-American considered the family to be the only authentically valid institution, and sought his own fulfilment within the family, thereby handing down within the group values that were so individualistic that they discouraged participation in politics and joining political parties.

Luconi argues that "the widespread conviction that Italian immigrants brought with them behaviour models which inhibited involvement in politics, typical of the rural society from which they came, has therefore contributed to reinforcing the hypothesis of the marginality of electoral participation in the history of the Italian ethnic group in the United States, and consequently has diverted scholars' attention from this area of research."

It is this very historiographical void concerning the electoral behaviour of Italo-Americans between the two world wars and the detailed analysis of their votes in specific cities that Luconi aims to remedy with this piece of research which, among other things, with the aid of statistics presents an entirely new picture of the increase in Italo-American female voters at the time of the Democratic victory, several years after women's suffrage which was granted in America in 1920.

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J.M. MARTÍNEZ CARRIÓN (ed.): *El nivel de vida en la España rural, siglos XVIII-XX*, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2002.

This collected volume is the first publication dedicated to the subject of living standards and the quality of life by leading Spanish experts on agrarian history. The methodologies applied for assessment of well-being are innovative and make use of the indicators provided by the most up-to-date literature.

Consequently, in addition to quantitative observations on actual income and its distribution in the agrarian world, we find indicators on physical stature, infant mortality and education. Several authors focus on the agrarian "labour market" at a time before it actually existed as such, as well as on farm consumption and the assignment of resources on family farms.

Javier Moreno Lázaro, Ramón Garrabou and Enric Tello, José Miguel Lana Benicasím and Ángel Pascual Martínez Soto analyse the development of standards of living on the basis of data on actual income and association movements. Their conclusions, applicable to different regions, show that, in parallel to industrialisation, Spanish agrarian capitalism gave rise to inequalities by transferring income and capacity for consumption from agrarian day labourers to landowners. A number of the aforementioned authors infer that the reduction of consumption by agrarian day labourers resulted in increases in the rent paid for land and a heavier tax burden. The parameters and destination of these diversions of income require further study on a broader basis, since they might imply both obstacles and stimulants to economic development.

The study of consumption and the dynamics of family economies was undertaken by Rafael Domínguez Martín for the Atlantic coast and by Josep Colomé, Enric Sagué and Enric Vicedo for Catalonia. In the case of the Atlantic region, the study of the Basque Country and Galicia indicates that the process of integration of agriculture into the market (in the Basque Country) had a beneficial effect on levels of wellbeing. This is in contrast, however, with the situation in the Catalan area, based on a sampling of different local regions and types of agricultural specialisation, which shows that needs for ongoing production on agrarian properties could not be met solely through exploitation of the property. Thus, detailed examination of the analysis of family farm operations and their cycle of reproduction, shows that the overall impact of the process of integration into the market, while surely positive, was less considerable.

Nevertheless, it is perhaps in the indicators of the standard of living, infant mortality and physical stature that we find the main characteristics of the major trends in evolution of wellbeing in rural Spain. In the first place, it is noted that there was no improvement in infant mortality in nineteenth-century Spain, and, in line with data on stature, infant mortality rose after the 1850s. A decline in infant mortality is not confirmed until the twentieth century, with an improvement in the infant mortality rate throughout the twentieth century, coinciding with the slow spread and application of medical knowledge. These results are confirmed in part by the data on stature provided by José Miguel Martínez Carrión, Juan José Pérez Castejón and Gloria Quiroga Valle, which also point to the close relationship between stature and per capita income. The general trend in standards of living is characterised by a decline between 1860 and 1881, with subsequent improvement and heavy dependence on the economic situation:

after World War I stature decreased in line with the evolution of per capita income. According to the authors, stature is therefore a reliable indicator of standard of living which quickly reflects changes in economic development and standards of living.

José M. Borrás Llop and Carmen Sarasúa provide a view of Spain's backwardness also in the area of schooling. In fact, it would appear that backwardness in this respect was not overcome until the middle of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the degree of participation by boys and girls in remunerated activities was still high, although the first evidence of advances in this respect is noted around that time. Likewise, Carmen Sarasúa's monograph on education in Spain in the middle of the nineteenth century stresses the role of schools in the differentiation of the socialisation and labour orientation of boys and girls.

In short, this is the first book devoted to the subject of levels of wellbeing in Spain from the standpoint of agrarian history. The results, which point to the backwardness of Spain during the nineteenth century and the decline in wellbeing (based on stature) between 1860 and 1880, are novel, particularly in respect to the methodologies applied. The reader will undoubtedly wonder why focal points of industrialisation are not also included. However, this would certainly require comparative studies. Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that during the nineteenth century, and a substantial part of the twentieth century, Spain was a mainly agrarian country and, as stressed by several of the authors of this work, a rather backward one. This work certainly merits the widest possible distribution.

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J. M. MORICEAU, *La Terre et les Paysans aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, France et Grande Bretagne*. Guide d'Histoire agraire, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 199, p. 319.

Chronologies, encyclopedias, dictionaries of facts, of historical characters, of wars, gazetteers and editions of *Who's Who* have been a constant feature in twentieth-century historiography. There is not a single country, at least in the Western world, where some of these useful and precious auxiliary tools of historiography have not been published. Most interest has been in the chronology of events and the protagonists of the political scene. Limited attention has been given to the economic aspects of history. Recently, however, this sector, too, has been the subject of research, which has led to the publication of encyclopedias and dictionaries of inventors, discoveries and innovations that have affected changes in production activity, and therefore our everyday life, modifying the

economic relationships between nations, and shaping a new and more complex economic and social scene. Increasing esteem for this kind of research is spreading from production to other aspects of economic activity, to the world of economists, industrial entrepreneurs and bankers, and to the many laws which have encouraged or governed the process of economic transformation. Every month new works of this type are published, both in Italy and abroad. For example, among recent publications, we find the series of volumes aimed at facilitating research on financial and fiscal history, edited by the French *Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière*, and the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Ships and Boats*; and there are many other examples we could quote.

The book under review belongs to this field of study, and aims to make available to scholars of the history of agriculture, albeit limited to two centuries - the seventeenth and the eighteenth - and to two countries - France and Great Britain - , a great number of studies which aim to illustrate the variety and multiplicity of the problems that assailed French and British agriculture. Placing their agrarian bibliographies side by side proves extremely useful, because it breaks the isolation in which each historiography had previously existed, but above all because it stimulates comparison between two centuries of extraordinary inventions in agriculture, and it enables the reader to grasp the complexity of the progress of European agricultural history by pointing out local retardations and adjustments, and also to see the interconnections which linked France and Great Britain to each other. If a similar comparison were extended to other European countries, perhaps the similarities or differences ascertained could contribute to providing a new way of understanding the stages and development of European agriculture.

The book contains more than 2,600 bibliographic entries, concerning more than 1,750 authors. More than 2,000 titles are listed for France alone, 400 of which are monographs which include 135 original theses, cartography studies and agricultural statistics.

The volume is divided into twelve chapters. It begins with references to the historiographical debate on the role of agriculture, and goes on to list manuals, fundamental works and comparative studies, dwelling upon the specific works concerning France and Great Britain. The chapter on implements is particularly interesting: without making any distinction between French works and British works, there are lists of the main reviews of the sector, together with the illustrated volumes, complementary bibliography and works published in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, atlases, dictionaries and inventories. Contemporary printed sources (memoirs, chronicles of peasant revolts, *cabiers de doléances*, publications dating from before 1906, agronomic literature) are included. There is a long list of monographs and of regional, social, family, local and sectoral reports, with particular attention to some of them, differentiating the French from the British. Then there are the specific bibliographies on "landscapes and the occupation of the land"; "peasant ownership and land

circulation"; "agricultural and agronomic practice"; "the relationship between agriculture and the economy"; "a cross between agronomy and economy: in search of the "agricultural revolution"; "peasant societies"; "agrarian movements and relationships between the peasant world and protest". The book ends with the list of indexes. They facilitate quick consultation, and allow the place, author, book or issue under investigation to be traced easily.

The preparation of this book must have been laborious and demanding, but the end result is of obvious practical value and supplies a precious stimulus to research on the history of agriculture; it also opens up a debate, which is just as useful and stimulating, on the existence of fashions in the field of historical research. It is a fact that the greater or smaller degree of interest in researching agricultural history has often depended on external circumstances, at least in France. It was, for example, the competition launched by the *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques* during the Second Empire which gave impetus to research on the "agricultural classes". However, it was not until the great agricultural crisis that assailed the global economy in the following century, in the 1930s, that a revival in research on agricultural history was seen - a revival which ended as the crisis eased, giving way to other more dramatic events. Research on agricultural history did not pick up again until the end of the Second World War. Only then, between 1950 and 1990, did "rural monographs" become fashionable again, and did historians and geographers both to the same extent undertake research on the history of agricultural structures and events.

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R. NIERI, *Costituzione e problemi sociali. Il pensiero politico di Sidney Sonnino*, ETS, Pisa, 2000, pp.294.

In recent years there has been an increased interest in and a revival in research on the life and work of Sidney Sonnino (1847-1922). The year 2000 saw the publication (by Olschki, edited by Pier Luigi Ballini) of the proceedings of a conference (*Sidney Sonnino e il suo tempo*), held at San Casciano Val di Pesa in 1997 on the centenary of the publication of *Torniamo allo Statuto* in *Nuova Antologia*: the conference dealt with various aspects and issues of Sonnino's progress until 1914. Shortly before, the correspondence between Sonnino and Emilia Toscanelli Peruzzi, Ubaldino's learned wife, a leading-figure of Tuscan moderatism, had been published (*Lettere di Sidney Sonnino ad Emilia Peruzzi, 1872-1878. Con in appendice alcune lettere di Emilia Peruzzi ed un articolo di Sidney Sonnino*, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, 1998). This correspondence was edited by a young researcher, Paola Carlucci, who, at the above-mentioned conference, gave a paper on Sidney

Sonnino's cultural and political formation between 1847 and 1882. Carlucci had previously published a paper on the Sonnino family tree, with particular reference to Sidney's father, Isacco, the principal share-holder of the Tuscan National Bank (*L'ascesa sociale di un banchiere nell'Italia unita. Per un profilo biografico di Isacco Sonnino, 1803-1878*, in *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 1995, pp. 391-424). Recently Paola Carlucci has published a book entitled *Il giovane Sonnino fra cultura e politica 1847-1886* (Archivio Guido Izzi, Rome, 2002, Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano. Biblioteca scientifica. Serie II).

Non-Italian historiography has also produced publications on Sonnino, although the results are not always satisfactory, as in the case of the book by the Australian historian Geoffrey A. Haywood (*Failure of a Dream. Sidney Sonnino and the Rise and Fall of Liberal Italy, 1847-1922*, Olschki, Florence, 1999).

There is, however, no doubt that, contrary to the traditional, abused and narrow interpretation of the figure of Sonnino as a champion of conservatism, recent historiography is focussing on the real value and significance of Sonnino's reformist programmes and on his becoming aware of the new industrial scene with its various social implications, studied in the *Rassegna settimanale*, the magazine started together with Leopoldo Franchetti.

Some representatives of the new Tuscan historiography and researchers on Tuscany (Romano Coppini, Paola Carlucci, Andrea Moroni and Alessandro Volpi) are, in fact, at present carrying out research on the estates and the business activities of the landed-banking aristocracy in nineteenth-century Tuscany, with special attention to the work of Cosimo Ridolfi, the founder of the Istituto Agrario Pisano.

Among these historians specialising in Tuscan moderatism, Rolando Nieri, a professor at the University of Pisa, has for years carried out research on Sonnino's liberalism and reformism: one of Nieri's first published works, written together with Romano Coppini, was the subtle analysis *Amministrazione e politica a Pisa nell'età della Destra storica*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1971.

Nieri has written numerous papers on Sonnino's political doctrine and his socio-economic vision.

These papers have been collected and published in this book, with a rich and hitherto unpublished preface entitled *Lo Statuto albertino e il regime rappresentativo*.

Nieri announces that he intends "to start a re-examination of Sonnino, to act as a stimulus for a better understanding of the potentiality of Italian liberalism. (...) Perhaps to a greater extent than any other liberal politician, Sonnino brings to Italian liberalism social issues, not limited merely to the issue of Southern Italy".

What Nieri points out concerning Sonnino's position (which he upheld in Parliament) at the time of the agricultural crisis in the 1880s is significant. The member for San Casciano's first statements distinguished him from the political figures of the agrarian class to which he too belonged: "For Sonnino, the key issue (...) consisted (...) in tackling the social problem of the

countryside in the context of a development process. The root of the troubles, which were also the obstacles to improvement, lay in the ordering of land-ownership and its consequent social relationships". Just as an excise protection policy for cereals was to be opposed in that it would have rendered the maintenance of the labour force more difficult and therefore jeopardized, so, according to Sonnino, a real rise in agricultural production levels could not take place if there were no changes in the relationships between peasants and land-owners. This attitude was unlike that of his conservative "colleagues" such as Jacini and Salandra, who blamed the agricultural crisis entirely on fiscal pressure and on insufficient modernisation and rationalisation in land management, totally ignoring the problem of the organisation of ownership, and entrusting to the future any improvement in peasants' living conditions.

Nieri points out ingeniously: "It could therefore be said that Sonnino, worried about the social effects economic development can have, arrives coherently, by means of an interesting *iter*, at a paradox: capitalism without what, according to Marx, was its fundamental basis - the existence of labour as a commodity".

In this context, universal suffrage represented for Sonnino the legal instrument by which the bourgeoisie could affirm its superiority, based on a precise social mission, and not through wealth or abuse of power.

Nieri writes on Sonnino's reformist ideas: "A number of considerations concerning the economy as a whole and its possibilities of development are an essential part of his doctrine: as well as constituting a real basis for his reformism, they make him in many ways a modern landowner and the supporter of a policy of expanding the production process, and for opposing speculation and profiteering at the expense of a balance of interests and submission to the interests of a banking and financial monopoly." The reader must bear in mind the great progress towards the centralisation of the currency-issuing system which Sonnino made later as Minister of the Treasury and Finance.

Sonnino dreamed of a reforming bourgeoisie which, "proving itself capable of setting in train a solution to the problems of the lower classes, would gain their approval, basing its main claim to superiority on this capacity" but leaving room for an "autonomy and antithetical expression" of the lower classes by means of universal suffrage, which ought to act as a safety valve for social pressures. Nieri comments: "These premises outlined a reformist policy of considerable importance, aimed at identifying and channelling into the institutions latent forces which could be dangerous to the social and political set-up. Sonnino was pointing the way to (...) the evolution of the liberal system in the face of new problems, where there was room for an independent role of popular political forces". But this protection and orientation of the lower classes had to take place within a regular political system, and not as mere "patronage" of the strongest. And here Sonnino's

fundamental worry about political and institutional stability resurfaced. Neri stresses that the achievement of political and institutional stability was "a continuous worry" for Sonnino, "faced as he was with a situation which was in several ways refractory".

In fact, Sonnino's national plan, which envisaged the position of the bourgeoisie not in terms of privilege but rather as a role to be earned with a sound policy of reforms and based on cohesion within the ruling classes, was shattered with the crisis of Tuscan moderatism which saw the predominance of the landed-financial and regionalist component, while, on a more general level, the protectionist decision "eliminated the conditions and the possibilities of putting into practice a similar reform project". The cry of alarm came a few years later in *Torniamo allo Statuto* which, although often considered the manifesto of conservatism, actually signified for Sonnino salvation from the degeneration of parliamentarianism and the real recovery of the separation of powers to prevent the Chamber from being - in the words of the future Premier - "subordinate to the ministry, i.e. to that group of men who have, no matter how, seized power and who, with intimidation and electoral corruption in its myriad forms, command the majority to their liking".

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General Management for Archives, Rome

M. SANZ GARCIA, *Alava en la moderna siderurgia española. S. Pedro de Araya, 1847-1935*, Vitoria, Diputación Foral, 1998, pp. 331.

In recent decades there has been a perceptible change in views about Spanish industrialization. In his classic book of 1975 (*El fracaso de la Revolución Industrial en España*) J. Nadal described this process in terms of failure, but, as a result of the extensive research carried out since then by Spanish scholars, it would be very difficult today to argue that the Spanish economy in the nineteenth-century was an example of failure and backwardness. Without denying the weak points of the Spanish economy, such as the bad endowment of some key natural resources like coal and the imbalances in the structure of landed property and in wealth and rent distribution, today it is widely acknowledged that some regions (the Basque Country and Catalonia) experienced considerable economic growth, together with clear structural change, and the same could be said about some economic sectors like the Catalanian cotton and the Basque metal industries.

Not by chance, these activities have long attracted the interest of Spanish historians. As for the Basque metal industries, thanks to the works of E. Fernández

de Pinedo, L. M Bilbao, R. Uriarte I. Carrión and A. Escudero¹, among many others, we have a broad and long-run view of its history since the last centuries of the Middle Ages. This sector experienced an important development during the early modern period, based on the famous Basque bloomeries. After a long and difficult transitional phase in the central decades of the nineteenth century, marked by the decay of the old bloomeries, the introduction of new and more advanced technologies and the adoption of a new legal framework the Basque metal industries went through a new period of growth. Among the innovations of this phase we should emphasize the birth of a group of powerful and modern companies, well known to historians such as Altos Hornos de Vizcaya or Echevarría, which were a central part of Spanish capitalism until the second half of the twentieth century. But not all companies were as fortunate as Altos Hornos or Echevarría. Many other smaller firms tried throughout the period to preserve their place in the market against the competition of the most powerful firms, and in "Alava" M. A. Sanz García analyzes one of these, down to present day, "S. Pedro de Araya", and provides us with some insights to improve our knowledge of some basic aspects of Spanish industrialization.

Like many other Basque metal companies founded in the fourth decades of the nineteenth century, S. Pedro de Araya was set up in 1847 with the idea of working for the Spanish market (chapter 1). During its first decades, the new company adopted the same technological pattern as the most advanced Spanish firms of the time, so the old bloomeries were replaced by blast furnaces in a second stage (pp. 54-55). From the beginning, it was clear that S. Pedro de Araya suffered a serious problem of production costs that is clearly revealed by the author: while the Asturian and especially the big Basque firms enjoyed easy and cheap access to basic inputs like coal and mineral iron ore (we should remember here the rich Somorrostro mines), this was more difficult for S. Pedro, whose main advantage lay in its proximity to good reserves of charcoal. Given these constraints it is easy to understand the twofold strategy adopted by the Ajuria family, the owners of the company.

First, the Ajurias always showed a continuous and strong interest in the adoption of all kinds of methods and techniques to reduce their production costs. Second, and most important, they soon discovered that it was impossible for S. Pedro de Araya to produce cheap steel, so they opted for a more limited but completely rational approach: knowing that the vast reserves of charcoal

¹ Sec L.M Bilbao and Fernandez De Pinedo: "Auge y crisis de la siderometalurgia tradicional en el País Vasco, 1700-1850" in *La economía española al final del Antiguo Régimen*, (Madrid, 1982). L. M Bilbao, "La industria siderometalúrgica tradicional en el P.Vasco, 1450-1720", *Hacienda Pública Española*, n 108-109, (1987). E. Fernandez De Pinedo, "From the Bloomery to the Blast-Furnace: Technical change in the Spanish Iron-Making", *The Journal of European Economic History*, n 17, (1988). I. M Carrion Arregui, *La siderurgia guipuzocoana en el siglo XVIII*, (San Sebastián, 1991). R. Uriarte Ayo, *Estructura, desarrollo y crisis de la siderurgia tradicional vizcaína, 1700-1840*, (San Sebastián, 1988). A. Escudero, *Minería e Industrialización en Vizcaya*, (Barcelona, 1998).

allowed then to produce malleable iron of the highest quality, they decided to manufacture this type of iron, which in a second phase was transformed into all kind of products (like nails and tools) demanded by Spanish agriculture.

Broadly speaking, this strategy was successful until the second decade of the twentieth century, when high charcoal prices and wages increased the production costs of the company, precisely at a time when other companies were reducing them, and destroyed the main comparative advantage of S. Pedro de Araya.

The book deals with other important aspects, like commercialization (chapter 3) and the condition of the workforce employed by the company (chapter 5). As for the first aspect, S. Pedro de Araya enjoyed the advantage of its proximity to the agricultural markets of Aragón and Navarra, where a large part of its production was sold. At the same time, the author has analyzed the history of the sales agreement (cartels), which the main companies of the sector signed in order to stabilize the market and to face the danger of falling prices. As economic theory would have predicted, these agreements kept the price levels artificially high, helping the survival of the most inefficient firms, but this caused an overproduction crisis which destroyed the 1897 cartel. A new cartel was created in 1906 (*Central Siderúrgica*), but S. Pedro de Araya, which had been member of the previous agreements, preferred not to join the new one this time. It should be remarked that this did not have negative consequences for the company and, in fact, sales experienced clear growth since 1907 which peaked in the years between 1909-1913.

Chapter 5, dedicated to the analysis of the workforce condition, is also interesting. The nearby town of Bilbao had been the birthplace of Spanish socialism, which very soon developed into a well-organized and strong political party with its own trade union. This movement sustained a long fight against the local entrepreneurs, most of them grouped around monarchist parties, so during the last decades of the nineteenth century the industrial area around the city was the centre of sharp political conflict. Although, at first sight, a similar pattern could have been expected in S. Pedro, this never happened, and the reasons advanced by the author to explain this are clear and convincing. The factory was relatively far from the provincial capital, Vitoria, situated in a rural area, so its workers did not experience dramatic and sudden changes in their traditional way of life. At the same time, the owners of the company always exerted a strong influence on the workers with the obvious idea of preserving social stability. In this respect, it should be remembered that, like other Basque and Spanish businessmen during the same period, the Ajurias were also politicians who played an important role in the political life of the province.

Alava en la siderurgia española has many relevant merits but we would like to mention two, as E. Fernández de Pinedo does in the prologue. First, in spite of its undeniable value, the documentary sources most frequently employed in the analysis of the Spanish economy in the nineteenth century possess a

macroeconomic character, so they do not give too much information on such topics as sales agreements, the reasons for the adoption or rejection of technological changes, or the strategies followed by the entrepreneurs. Fortunately, M. A. Sanz has employed a completely different type of source: the documentation filed in the company archives, and this circumstance has allowed him to throw new light on these basic aspects.

Second, as a result of the recent development of business history in Spain today we have an increasingly large number of works and studies on Spanish entrepreneurs, such as the Ybarras, and companies such as the aforementioned Altos Hornos and Echevarría and the firms engaged in maritime transport (see, for example, the works by J. M. Valdaliso and P. Díez Morlán¹). These entrepreneurs and firms embodied the bright side of Spanish industrialization, but in *Alava* its author has chosen to give us a slightly different history. S. Pedro de Araya cannot be compared in any way to Altos Hornos de Vizcaya. It was a relatively small family firm which had to compete for its survival in a very specific market, that of the products demanded by an overwhelming agricultural country like Spain. To do this, the owners of the company combined the use of highly traditional elements (the use of charcoal) with the adoption of those technologies best suited to their requirements. This was a very dynamic and rational way to behave (it is no accident that the Ajuria family introduced the first electric furnace in Spain in 1906) and the success of this family of Basque entrepreneurs can be fully appreciated when we remember that S. Pedro de Araya survived until the second half of the twentieth century. Seen from this perspective, it seems clear that there is some ground for a reconsideration of the role played by entrepreneurs and markets in the Spanish economy in the twentieth century. It is widely acknowledged that the narrowness of its internal markets accounts for much of the failure of Spanish industrialization, but the example of S. Pedro suggests the opposite: without denying their limitations, the country's internal markets had some potential for growth, so the question to answer would be why other companies did not exploit this. Considering all this, it is clear that *Alava* poses an intriguing and fascinating question, so the reading of this book will be very useful to all those interested in the Spanish economy in the nineteenth century.

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¹ J. M. Valdaliso, *Los naveros vascos y la marina mercante in España, 1860-1935*. Una historia económica, (Bilbao 1991).