

G. CORONA, *Demani e individualismo agrario nel Regno di Napoli (1780-1806)*, ESI, Naples, 1995, pp. 225.

In the last thirty years of the eighteenth century, the feudal system in the Kingdom of Naples was constantly engaged in a struggle to maintain the political, economic and social power it had gained throughout the early modern period. An important aspect of this process was the conflict over appropriation of portions of feudal property by the community, or conversely the appropriation of communal lands by feudal lords. In this connection, historians have stressed the cathartic and resolute nature of the laws abolishing feudalism during the Napoleonic period, especially 1806-08, but until now there has been no detailed study of the different types of conflict between the feudal barons and the community over the usurping of the land nor of the measures adopted by the government about this problem previous to the aforementioned laws.

An important contribution towards filling this gap is Gabriella Corona's study on the disputes between communities and feudal lords over the sometimes peaceful and sometimes violent usurping of land in the last few decades of the eighteenth century. Corona links such conflict to the question of ownership rights and examines the complex legal system governing land in the feudal regime.

The basic distinction which Corona draws in this respect is between the concept of *allodio* and *demanio*: the former implied the free ownership of land while the latter implied land that was subject to a number of restrictions for public use. The *allodio* comprised three different kinds of property: land owned by a private citizen (*beni allodiali* in the strictest sense), land owned by the feudal lord (*beni burgensatici*) and land owned by the community and church bodies (*patrimonio*). Public land was itself divided into *comunale* or *universale*, which was of ancient origin, and crown and feudal lands. The distinction between *allodio* and *demaniale* regarding the absence or presence of restrictions about the public use of land had implications regarding alienation, which was envisaged for the first type of land but not the second.

Yet apart from the formal distinction between the various categories of property, a study of the usurping of land at the end of the eighteenth century brings to light a much more complex situation and the existence of an uncertain and contradictory relationship between the different kinds of property. For example, on the same land feudal tithes were paid to the feudal lord and rent was paid to the owner, while feudal dues were exacted from common lands and common rights were exercised on private property. Moreover, the prevalence of a mixed agricultural system based on transhumant sheep-farming and cereal growing implied an organisation of space which transcended ownership boundaries. That is to say, the distinction between the two categories was quite fluid and the ambiguous juridical status of the land and of the restrictions and dues to which it was

subjected, provided the justification for the claims made upon it, for the lawsuits and for the complex and often contradictory legal interpretations given out by the Kingdom's law courts.

The frequency with which the arguments to justify the usurping of land arose in the lawsuits, has enabled Corona to identify a common pattern of litigation with the feudal lords and communities drawing on interpretations outside the sphere of feudal law. Communities drew on the tradition of natural law which considered the free use of land to be a natural right of the inhabitants of the Kingdom. Thus in the absence of an ownership title, land was to be considered common land, the most ancient of public lands. In the case of feudal land, the same reasoning implied the right to use the land for public purposes.

As regards the arguments used by the feudatories, the main one advanced to support feudal claims to land was related to the investiture that the lord received over the whole fief, in accordance to the law issued by Emperor Charles V in 1536. In practice, "feudal land" and "fief" were not equivalent since the latter included common lands, the lord's private property, the land belonging to church bodies and private citizens and sometimes crown land or land belonging to other feudatories. Yet the lords claimed that all the land was "feudal" and thus subject to feudal dues.

Of course, this kind of conflict was not just confined to the last thirty years of the eighteenth century but arose throughout the early modern era. Nonetheless, in this period we can see both elements of change and of continuity with the past. Administrative and judicial sources testify to an increase in disputes over the closure of public land and the need for a clearer definition of ownership rights, which saw private citizens as much against communities as against feudal lords. Moreover, the geographical distribution of such conflict was becoming clear: the Sannio, Appennino Dauno, Irpinia and the Cilento. In the case of the community's protests against the usurping of land, these were most frequent in Abruzzo, Molise, north Apulia and east Basilicata - those areas, that is, in which the feudal system was declining and with it the power of the feudal lords.

Corona links the intensification of social conflict over land in the Kingdom of Naples to the process of transition from feudalism to capitalism which saw a change in the economic behaviour of agricultural groups throughout Europe, a process defined by Marc Bloc as "the struggle for agrarian individualism." But in the case of mainland South Italy the conflict between communities and feudatories was directly related to the process of economic and administrative reform started by Charles Bourbon in the first half of the eighteenth century, which intensified in the last few decades of the century.

Bourbon reformism aimed above all to weaken the judicial power exercised by feudal lords through local courts, in order to guarantee the enforcement of a universal law which was equal for all subjects. Moreover, to

undermine the lords' power at its base, the government pursued a policy of returning fiefs to the Crown while those which had already returned to the Crown through devolution were not sold again. At the same time, division of Church land was carried out in Sicily in 1768 and 1774, in Terra di Lavoro in 1769-70, in Apulia in 1774 and in Calabria in 1783. In the 1780s portions of Crown property and common land were also divided up.

Government intervention and policy was promoted and bolstered by the spread of ideas from the second generation of Neapolitan enlightened thinkers; Gaetano Filangieri's *Scienza della legislazione*, Giuseppe Maria Galanti's *Descrizione storica e geografica delle Sicilie* and Giuseppe Palmieri's *Riflessioni sulla pubblica felicità* all appeared in the 1780s. Despite the differences in their approach, all these works shared a very negative view of feudalism which was seen as the cause of the backwardness and weakness that hampered the Kingdom's economic growth, notwithstanding the wealth of its natural resources. As far as the question of land was concerned, feudal and public organisation of land was considered to be an obstacle to the spread of wealth and a more just distribution of wealth. Thus it was necessary to divide up and privatise feudal and common land and promote the diffusion of small holdings.

In this period, some of the major Neapolitan thinkers were appointed to the administrative bodies in charge of reform, ministries, law courts and a special financial body, the *Supremo Consiglio delle Finanze*, which was set up in 1782 and whose members included Grimaldi, Palmieri and Filangieri. However, the reformers' plans to radically overhaul the existing system clashed with the ideas that prevailed among the Kingdom's magistrates who, although sharing the same goals, intended to achieve them on the basis of a legal tradition which had been built up over the centuries. Thus, while the enlightened thinkers favoured economic development using the criteria of efficiency and rationality in the distribution of land which was to be divided up into large, medium and small holdings so as to increase production, the Kingdom's magistrates pursued the criterion of distributive justice in observation of existing laws. This policy benefited non-landowners and caused a draining of government finances.

The Sovereign Edict of 1792, which stipulated the division and distribution of feudal and common land, embodied both these ways of thinking. In response to the first, the Edict reflected the change towards a full and absolute individual use of land, while following the second, it considered the division of land as a form of compensation for the loss of common rights and sanctioned the right to hold land in lease, which had been long established by legal tradition.

The Edict came into immediate effect as regards the division of common lands among the individual members of the community. Landless labourers were given land lying nearest to the village and better-off farmers received land lying further away, where more crops could be grown. Grazing land was

partly divided up among sheep-owners and partly put aside for common use. To make sure that division would not lead to an acceleration of the process of indiscriminate deforestation, the Edict laid down a number of rules to protect woodland.

The Edict was less effective as regards the division of feudal land. Contrary to what one might suppose, this was more the consequence of the vague way this part of the Edict had been formulated than the effects of a concerted reaction on the part of the feudal lords. Of course many feudatories opposed the implementation of the Edict but other lords accepted it, and this was something quite new.

The reasons for such behaviour were twofold. The first motivation was economic and regarded the management of land characterised by a precarious environmental equilibrium: the feudal lords might have found it more profitable for land that was destined to be deforested or cleared for tillage - and thus a possible cause of hydrological disruption in the surrounding areas - to be divided up and cultivated. Yet the disputes between feudal lords and communities in the last part of the eighteenth century have also been interpreted as the result of a political struggle within the community itself. In this case the usurping of a piece of common land was not the real reason behind a dispute but only an instrument for gaining local power according to rules which were to be consolidated in the course of the nineteenth century.

Gabriella Corona's analysis of the conflict over the usurping of land in the Kingdom of Naples in the twenty years preceding the 1792 Edict and in the period immediately following it, is completed by case studies involving five communities. In conclusion we can say that a good historiographical framework, a broad perspective for interpretation and the constant testing of theories through the examination of facts and documentary evidence, combine to make this book a valuable contribution for our understanding of the rise of agrarian individualism in mainland South Italy in the modern age.

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L.DE ROSA, *Lo sviluppo economico dell'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, Editori Laterza, Rome-Bari, 1997, pp. XII-450.

In Italy the harsh aftermath of the Second World War, which lasted until the end of the 1940s, was a time of political instability and of uncertainty about institutional organisation in Italy and about Italy's international position. It was also the period in which the moral and material reconstruction of the nation was being undertaken. Italy was a country with very serious economic problems: great monetary confusion, increasing

inflation, growing unemployment, the need to increase the system's production capacity and to make up the considerable technological gaps in industry were only some of the more visible aspects of one grave crisis.

Immediately after the end of the war, experts and those responsible for Italy's economic policy realised that, to emerge from the crisis, the nation's production system required foreign initiative and foreign capital. But how was it possible to conceive of the arrival of such aid when the social and economic conditions of Italy were generally unknown abroad? How was it possible to make known the many resources the country offered, the progress which could be made if adequately aided and the groundlessness of the prejudices about Italy?

Italy had lived through a decade of virtual isolation from the rest of the more progressive world, ever since the League of Nations had enforced economic sanctions against Italy at the time of the Abyssinian War. The Fascist régime reacted to sanctions by choosing autarky, which both deprived Italy of a great deal of technological progress made elsewhere during the 1930s and helped to hide from international public opinion the economic results achieved.

In this atmosphere of persistent isolation, but of ever-increasing awareness of the necessity to emerge from such isolation, it was decided, in 1946, to publish a periodical in English, the *Review of Economic Conditions in Italy*, starting the following year. Costantino Bresciani Turrone was responsible for this initiative. Chairman of the *Banco di Roma* from 1945, he was one of the major Italian and European economists of the twentieth century and an old friend of Luigi Einaudi, then Governor of the Bank of Italy, who was perhaps co-responsible for the idea. *Banco di Roma* was to publish the periodical and Bresciani Turrone was to be its editor. The publication was to be sent to the world's major banks and most important import and export companies, with the aim of promoting a programme of international trade among companies.

Behind the publication of the *Review* lay the idea that Italy's return to the international trade circuit was the necessary premise to any recovery strategy, but that this aim was thwarted by the insufficiency of publications on the subject, in particular addressed to Anglo-Saxon countries. The first issue of the *Review* published on 15 January 1947, contained an introductory article by Bresciani Turrone and a series of notes, comments and statistics that gave a fairly broad picture of the structure and the transformation processes of the Italian economy. It included data concerning the textile, iron, electrical, chemical, ship-building, mining, food and building industries, as well as information on agriculture and animal husbandry. Salaries, consumption and prices, aspects of the money market, the credit market and the financial market, the state of the stock exchange, public finances, international agreements and railway and electricity reconstruction programmes were all featured. Lastly, the editorial staff of the *Review* pledged their willingness to provide information on and

explanations about any economic or financial problem that concerned Italy.

For more than thirty years the *Review* has maintained the same policy it began with its first issue, providing otherwise-difficult-to-find information on the Italian economy and publishing high-profile articles by economists, politicians and bankers. The *Review* is sent to more than 90 countries, and has been universally recognised as a valuable and indispensable instrument for all scholars and economists interested in Italy. Since 1979, when the economist Mario Arcelli took over as editor, the *Review* has been fully aware of the changes in the availability of data, statistics and comments on the state of the Italian economy, which can now be obtained from the sources that were unavailable soon after the Second World War. And so attention has been concentrated on the structural conditions of the Italian economy and on the processes of change that affect it. This does not mean that the aim of encouraging the dissemination of information and opinions among scholars and economists in Italy and abroad has been lost, but it means that the *Review* gives priority to analyses of the economy as a whole rather than to the individual sectors.

The *Banca di Roma*, which grew out the merger of *Banco di Roma* with two other banks, has continued to publish the *Review of Economic Conditions* in Italy, and, on the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the first issue, has sponsored the publication of three commemorative volumes. The first of these has been written by Luigi De Rosa and deals with Italy's economic development from the end of the Second World War until the present time. Economic development has been reconstructed from comments, data and statistics published over the years in the *Review*. A further two volumes will follow, with a collection of articles on *Storia, economia e società: 1947-1997* and *Globalizzazione dei mercati e orizzonti del capitalismo*.

This is not the first time that Luigi De Rosa has written a major general study that traces the history of important economic institutions (he published *Storia del Banco di Roma (1982-1983)* and *Storia del Banco di Napoli. Istituto di emissione dell'Italia unita (1989-1992)*) or he has dealt with the economic evolution and structural change as in *Mezzogiorno spagnolo tra crescita e decadenza (1987)*.

In this book De Rosa retraces the history of the development of the Italian Republic, basing his analysis on the image that Italy's main economic experts developed in the *Review* for the international public. The result is a very impressive fresco. However the book is not only a history of the positive results achieved by the Italian economy, but also the reconstruction of failure and retrogression, as well as the uncertainty and the hesitancy which accompanied the progress and the determination to move forward. What emerges is an extremely complex and fragmentary picture which stresses the essential lines of thought, the salient passages, the philosophy and the work of those who lived through, commented on, and often tried to guide and correct that development.

This great mass of material is dealt with systematically both according to subject and to period: each one of the nineteen chapters deals with one aspect of the development process and the data regarding that aspect are presented for the most part in chronological order. De Rosa is fully aware that until 1979 the variety and the wide range of sectoral analyses published in the *Review* enabled him to give a full, detailed account of the Italian economy and the country's economic policies. However, changes to the *Review* after 1979 obliged him to adopt a macroeconomic approach in view of the themes addressed.

Since it is impossible to go over every subject dealt with in this book, we shall limit ourselves to the part which examines the Marshall Plan. This is of special interest to our understanding both of the kind of relationship that existed between the *Review* and economic conditions in Italy and abroad, and of the methodological approach De Rosa uses to reconstruct the connection between the contents of the *Review* and Italy's economic policies. It is a well-known fact that on 5th June 1947 General Marshall announced at Harvard the guide-lines of the Plan destined to go down in history as the Marshall Plan; the *Review* reported that the Plan was favourably received everywhere except among the left-wing parties and press.

The Plan had been drawn up as an instrument to speed up the economic reconstruction of Europe by co-ordinating the economic activities of the various countries, and, as such, it was judged a great opportunity for international cooperation and national development: in particular, the importance of the opportunity to increase the number or areas for redevelopment and to increase employment both in Italy and abroad did not pass unnoticed. The *Review* addressed the subject in more detail and argued that Italy's contribution to the economic reconstruction of Europe had first to consist in guaranteeing a minimum standard of living for the entire population and completing the reconstruction that was already underway by importing indispensable goods and raw materials.

De Rosa observes that these two priorities not only re-echoed a theory that Bresciani Turrone had put forward on several occasions, but, more importantly, they formed the basis of the memorandum in which the Italian government submitted to Washington its requests regarding the Marshall Plan. These requests were later granted: of the 700 million dollars assigned to Italy to import goods from the United States in the first year the Plan was applied, 35 percent was for foodstuffs, 14 percent for coal and the rest for machinery, oil refineries, steel, electrical goods and chemical products. The impression that the *Review* was able to influence discreetly government economic policy is reinforced by the subsequent developments connected with the implementation of the Marshall Plan.

In point of fact, De Rosa reminds the reader that initially the problem over the use of the Lire Fund had not been faced. This Fund was to consist of the profits from the sale of United States imports within the terms of the Plan.

Through the authoritative opinion of the economist Francesco Vito, the *Review* argued that the Lire Fund should play a productive role and contribute to absorbing large amounts of labour; in other words, this Fund was to be used to finance the building of public works for the development of the country's depressed areas, mainly in the South, and to invest in productive enterprises that would reduce unemployment. The proposal was accepted and in September 1948 the United States agreed that the Lire Fund be used to undertake a vast programme of public works with the above-mentioned aims.

But more was to follow. With another high-ranking economist Giuseppe Di Nardi, the *Review* intervened regarding the relationship between the money distributed through the Lire Fund and public finance. De Rosa points out that in a situation of falling consumption and growing unemployment Di Nardi believed that a public-works programme, which absorbed a large labour force, was indispensable. However the financing necessary for these public works were to be part of public expenditure already included in the government's budget, and merely the items of expenditure were to be listed. Designed to improve public finance, the Lire Fund in actual fact would avoid both a reduction in spending and increased taxation in other words it would exercise an anti-cyclical function.

The multiplier effect generated by the public-works programme would increase employment in other sectors, but it was important to phase the works. In this way the stocks and the goods produced with the raw materials from the Marshall Plan would be absorbed gradually, and at the same time a sudden increase in the currency in circulation, with its related inflationary effects, would be averted. The idea Di Nardi upheld in the *Review* was widely accepted and part of the Lire Fund was used to increase government revenue.

The implementation of the Marshall Plan in Italy and De Rosa's own reconstruction of the Plan, show that the *Review* played a dual role, especially straight after the Second World War: it was instrumental in breaking through the ten-year isolation imposed on Italy and in informing the rest of the world about Italy's great potential, and it provided a critical forum for discussing the choices Italy was called on to make at a time when she was deciding her future through the definition of her economic and political role at an international level.

De Rosa's brilliant analysis of the past fifty years does not hide the dark spots that have developed during this period nor the negative repercussions arising from the wrong choices made in Italy's economic policy. Nonetheless, his very comprehensive and coherent account of the process enables him to link events which apparently seem to be unrelated to the historical context that has engendered them. This book is a unique contribution to learning about the Italian economy.

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E. OTTE, *Sevilla y sus mercaderes a fines de la Edad Media*, Edición e introducción by A.-M. Bernal y A. Collantes de Teran, Universidad de Sevilla - Fundación El Monte, Sevilla 1996, pp. 339.

At last we can read a book that the author has been promising us for some time, a book that is the result of the many years he has spent studying trade in Seville from the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the modern era. In it, Enrique Otte, the greatest authority on the economic conditions that rendered possible Spanish exploration, conquest and colonization of the New World, paints a picture of the city's economy, an economy that was above all else connected with American trade. Otte lists the reasons which made the Andalusian capital an international metropolis in the fifteenth century, laying the foundations for its future monopoly over economic relations with the New World.

For about fifty years, using the works of Sayous, Hamilton, Melis, Verlinden and Carande as his starting point, Otte has done research on trade, navigation, agriculture and industry, publishing fundamental articles on these subjects. In this book he now gives us a very comprehensive picture of the city on the Guadalquivir which for centuries has offered hospitality and a varied range of investment opportunities to traders and investors from all over Europe, as well as to Sevillians. Antonio-Miguel Bernal and Antonio Collantes de Teran from the University of Seville have assisted in the publishing of the book; as a tribute to the outstanding contribution made by Otte to the history of Seville - the German scholar has spent all his life between Spain and Germany - they have chosen a magnificent edition and have further enriched the text, as we shall see later.

The book has five chapters. The first is about farming products; the second is about the principal manufactures of Seville; in the third we find an analysis of the infrastructures for trade; the fourth chapter is about imported goods; the fifth chapter is about the merchants and analyses the monetary and commercial instruments used in trade. The book ends with an extremely useful series of appendices, tables and charts that the editors included to facilitate reading and, at the same time, to render immediately visible a part of the huge mass of data used in the book. Appendices II, III and IV list the Genoese, Andalusian and English merchants mentioned in the text. Appendices VI and VII list the shipping arrivals and departures in the port of Seville from 1472 to 1515, with the date, name of the ship, name of the captain and the owner, the destination or the place of origin of the cargo and the name of the merchant who despatched the cargo.

Research has been based mainly on the contracts drawn up by the notaries of Seville in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which are indispensable for the study of the city's economic conditions in the late Middle Ages. As the editors point out, this is in all probability an all but definitive documentation because of the precarious condition of the sources

and the objective difficulty in the type of documentation used. The great tradition of German historiography which is so erudite, reliable, rigorous and positivist and is faultless in its pains to interpret and reproduce the documents correctly, is seen at work here: Otte has catalogued and processed some of the most difficult-to-deal-with documentation in the world, housed in the *Archivo de Protocolos Notariales* in Seville.

The economy of Seville in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was based on the products of the surrounding countryside. Otte states that Seville's success was due to its position as capital of an important agricultural area, since the marketing of agricultural products was the main activity of the local merchants and was the attraction for foreign operators. Oil was the most important product, followed by wine, cereals, vegetables, fruit, leather and skins. To obtain the goods, the merchants usually purchased in advance, a practice in which the big international merchants excelled: they were generally Genoese and had a trade network in the principal European markets at their disposal.

Otte then goes on to analyse Seville's manufacturing activities, showing that the city was essentially a trading centre where industry never gained the importance it held in the main European centres. The sole exception, on account of the huge investment of capital it involved, was soap, produced and marketed by the Genoese. The textile industry was next in importance: valuable woollen bed-covers were produced but their quality was inferior to those produced in Italy, Flanders, England and Catalonia. Trade in dyes was also important, and here again the big international merchants dominated. Other industries worthy of note were the crockery industry, the glass industry, the rope industry, the iron industry, the wood industry, the food industry, the printing industry, the building industry and the shoe industry.

As we have already noted, the remaining chapters are on trade. These are the most innovative and original chapters in the book and in them we find the core of the main results of Otte's research. Here Seville's role in the late Middle Ages and its American and international destiny is portrayed exemplarily. The export trade concerned mainly the agricultural products of the hinterland, but also raw materials, for example, wool and alum, and industrial products such as ship's biscuits, dried fruit, preserved meats, soap, crockery and ceramics. In analysing trade in Seville, Otte inevitably dwells on imports, which were essential to supply a city whose population doubled in a few decades. Seville imported many commodities, especially cereals, since the city often suffered from food shortages, as during the period from 1503 to 1509 when, to cope with the shortage of bread, the city authorities had to appeal to international merchants, firstly the Genoese, who sent ships with cargoes of grain from all over Europe to Seville. Other important imports were raw silk from Granada, Valencia and Calabria, dyes, alum, sugar from the Atlantic islands, spices, metals and above all textiles from England, the Low Countries and Valencia.

Even though trade connected with local production and consumption was so important, what made Seville a real crossroads for trade in the later Middle Ages was its role as a redistribution centre for the products traded between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. It is above all Seville's role in Atlantic trades in the fifteenth-century, which emerges from Otte's book. Just as Braudel reconstructed the history of Sudanese gold, Otte examines the history of gold in Seville. Genoese merchants were the most interested in buying gold, and they bought it for several reasons: firstly, to put it into circulation as currency, then to supply the large textile and gold-working industries in Genoa and lastly - and this is an original idea from Otte - to balance the trading account which was unfavourable for the Genoese since they bought much more than they sold in the Iberian peninsula.

The merchants in Seville were interested not only in gold but also in colonial produce. From the beginning, they traded with the African coast: as well as trading in gold, they traded in sugar, slaves and dyes, and, by means of expeditions organised from Seville, they played an active part in the conquest and the economic exploitation of the Canary Islands. Otte shows that, here again, the Genoese distinguished themselves, especially the members of the popular "fraternities" such as the Luxardo, the Franchi, the Cassana, the Sopranis and the Rippariolo, whose role as "conquest entrepreneurs" Otte illustrates; after investing considerable sums of money in financing the conquest expeditions, they became the most important traders in the islands' products, as well as sugar producers.

And so, before the discovery of America, the Atlantic was already the main destination as far as Seville shipping and trading were concerned. The Seville notarial documentation which Otte studied gives us some idea about shipping out of the Guadalquivir estuary. During the extremely well documented period from 1500 to 1515, 68,5 percent of known destinations were Atlantic ports and, of these, almost half were the Canaries and the Portuguese islands. Shipping in the Atlantic was engaged in the acquisition of colonial products, as we have already seen, and for supplying settlers in the Spanish and Portuguese islands with all sorts of merchandise. In conclusion, Otte shows that the complexity of shipping, the amount of capital involved and the importance of the maritime expeditions that sailed west from Seville and the whole of western Andalusia were such that the discovery of America by Andalusian merchants was inevitable.

Otte gives the reader a great deal of information about merchants. Of those operating in Seville, Otte indicates their main business, the techniques they adopted, the volume of their business, where they came from and their integration into Seville society, often at very high levels. The Andalusians were the most numerous: Otte has traced 546 merchants from this region, 188 of whom specialised in textiles. They were followed by the Genoese, who numbered 437, the merchants from Burgos who were ninetytwo, and the Basques who were 69. Otte has also recorded the trade of 57 merchants from

England, 20 from Florence, 15 from Valencia, 10 from Venice, 8 from Siena, 7 from Portugal and 5 from Flanders, merchants who were involved in the buying and selling of every kind of product that existed in international trade.

We have seen that the Genoese appear repeatedly in Otte's analysis: he has to be considered the greatest expert on this group of Italian merchants who settled in Andalusia. Otte argues that the most important date in Seville's economic history is 1277, when Genoese ships sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar to head towards England and Flanders, initiating links between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. From then onwards, the Genoese chose Seville as a centre for their trade with northern Europe, and their activities went on increasing during the fifteenth century, spreading throughout the whole of Spain. Otte studies their presence throughout Andalusia: at Jerez de la Frontera, Puerto de Santa Maria, Sanlucar de Barrameda and Gibraltar.

The role of the Genoese in the economic history of Spain at the beginning of the modern age is a key theme in the economic historiography produced in this century: Felipe Ruiz Martin writes of the *siglo de los genoveses*, contesting R. Ehrenberg's notion of *Zeitalter der Fugger*. But in "Die Negersklavenlizenz des Laurent de Gorrevod. Kastlisch-Genuesische Wirtschafts- und Finanzinteressen bei der Einfuhrung der Negersklaverei in Amerika", in *Spanische Forschungen der Gorresgesellschaft*, (1, Reihe 22, pp. 283-320, Munster 1965), and in "Il ruolo dei Genovesi nella Spagna del XV and XVII secolo", in *La repubblica internazionale del denaro tra XV e XVII secolo* (pp. 17-36, Bologna 1986), Otte had already criticised Ruiz Martin's and Ehrenberg's approach, maintaining that both of them make reference exclusively to public finance and neglect other aspects of economic life, such as trade and private finance. He argues that to understand the real significance of the Genoese presence in the Iberian peninsula, research must be carried out on every aspect of economic life; research that Otte has carried out meticulously all his life. With the study of the notarial documents Otte has restored the balance that had been upset by the study of government sources which were generally used in research. As far as public finance is concerned, Otte suggests using the expression *impero dei genovesi* which began before 1528, the date Ruiz Martin indicates as the beginning of Genoese hegemony: according to Otte, this began immediately after Charles was elected Emperor, or even at the beginning of the century when, after the death of Isabelle of Castile, the Spanish mercantile world which was already in ferment because of the liberalisation of American trade and the arrival of gold from the Antilles anxiously, awaited the dynastic changes hoped for and made by the Catholic Kings and the Hapsburg Emperor Maximilian.

Otte's research shows that in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Seville, as in many important trading centres in Europe, it was the merchants, and not the specialised bankers who controlled the city's financial life. During this period, the characteristics of Seville's financial activity emerged and, according to Bernal's recent research, they remained unchanged throughout the

seventeenth century. As one of the routes through which Sudanese gold came into Europe, Seville had the most important mint in Castile, and there were many people there who were concerned with money and banking. The adoption of financial instruments and trading practices, such as the bill of exchange, insurance and the very frequent recourse to bottomry as a means of financing colonial trading, made Seville a very important financial market even before the discovery of the West Indies.

Otte shows that once again Genoese merchants were protagonists; they took the lead in every aspect of finance, but especially in the use of the bill of exchange. As was already the case in the first half of the fifteenth century - according to Heer's research - Seville in the period studied in this book was part of the Genoese network for bills of exchange which linked it with the markets of the Aragonese Kingdom, the Canary Islands, the trade-fairs of Castile and with Genoa. Although the Genoese were the leaders in financial business, there were also many Andalusians, for the most part textile merchants but also artisans and members of every social group in the city. Otte's research also enables him to describe Sevillian society as being very inclined to financial investment: members of very different social classes had sufficient capital to take part in every kind of economic and speculative activity, including maritime loans,

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M. OVERTON, *Agricultural Revolution in England. The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500-1850*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. XIII-257.

The book under review is a detailed, general study on a sector of strategic importance which for many centuries has had a decisive influence on the economic development of European society and which still today continues to influence vast areas of the world, at times with very dramatic effects. The book presents in an orderly and concise way the results of the major works that have appeared on the subject, showing their basic concepts, the methodological approaches employed, the documentary evidence on which they rest, the various interpretations they have given rise to and the criticisms they have provoked among historians. The purpose is to provide the reader with basic theories about the subject, with the awareness that it is an arduous task to give definite and coherent interpretations about such a complex and demanding theme. Nonetheless we can say that that the attempt has for the most part been successful. Overton reaches out to a wide and non-specialist readership, giving his readers access to a subject whose

understanding is indispensable to our knowledge of the economic changes that have overtaken all sectors of the economy throughout the centuries, particularly the last few centuries.

The debate over the date of the beginning of the so-called agricultural revolution is dealt with by Overton at the start of his book. As is well known, this is a complex question which is not without ideological implications. While Overton sets out the main theories expressed by economic historians on the subject, he clearly leans toward the one which identifies the mid-eighteenth century as the turning point when there was a break with the traditional and very rigid agricultural system and methods of cultivation which had existed in England up till then. This belief, which is supported by a wealth of data and reasoning, is based on the close correlation between agricultural growth and population increase which became most evident in the second half of the eighteenth century with the contemporaneous and progressive decline in the number of those employed in the primary sector. This relation signalled the end of the famous "Malthusian Trap" which up till then had weighed heavily against any kind of gradual and steady growth of the population.

If we examine more closely Overton's analysis, especially the contents of the second and third chapters, the barriers and distortions which hampered a proper and harmonious development of the agricultural sector emerge very clearly. These existed throughout the English countryside, even though this fact should not induce us to view the primary sector as being homogeneous with uniform and stable characteristics which are easily defined. The very definition, agricultural sector, is necessarily general since it refers to a kind of society which was almost exclusively characterised by agricultural production, although it is very far removed from the multifaceted reality of rural England. In the English countryside, though the same could be said for nearly all the agricultural areas of the Old Continent, there were various types of farming, many diverse ways of ploughing, different crops and agrarian rotations. All these elements varied greatly, depending on the kind of soil and climate, local traditions and work habits, and they gave rise to rural situations which were much more varied than they are today. Nonetheless, one characteristic they all shared was the overriding preoccupation with manuring the soil at the start of every new productive season. Up to the nineteenth century, the main fertilizer was animal manure. This was obtained by putting cattle and sheep to graze in areas which needed to regain those natural substances that had been totally consumed in the previous cycles, above all nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. It was therefore difficult to make a clear division between activities related to agriculture and those related to livestock-raising, since being complementary they were interwoven and gave the farmer the opportunity to diversify his income. Similarly, the farmer could supplement his income with earnings from handicrafts produced in the slack periods of the agricultural year.

Another problem that has to be carefully examined in relation to the agricultural sector is that regarding the concept of ownership, about which we should make several basic remarks. In the sixteenth century practically none of the land in England was subject to private ownership rights. Much of the activity was performed collectively by workers of the land and was coordinated by the village community which was completely autonomous in the way it organised and governed its own field system. Up to the eighteenth century, the very term "farmer" was not used in the same way as we use it today, and those engaged in agriculture were classified according to whether they were owners or non-owners, rather than according to their specific tasks and skills. This is why it is difficult for historians to reconstruct a definite hierarchy and make a precise economic and social classification of those engaged in agriculture, especially at the lower end of the scale. The only valid distinction was between landowner and non-landowner, since this was thought to reflect the economic capacity of individuals to take possession of the most important commodity which, at that time, it was possible to purchase.

This was the basic situation regarding English agriculture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although it was fairly static and without the dynamic elements which might have enabled it to develop beyond a certain point, it was nonetheless much more varied and heterogeneous than has been imagined. During the eighteenth century a fundamental turning point occurred which changed the traditional systems and methods of cultivation, as well as transforming the concept of ownership. The elements of change were so evident that most historians have identified the mid-eighteenth century as the starting point of the so-called agricultural revolution. In particular, towards the end of the century, the centuries-old correlation between population and price increases came to an end: the growth rate of the population reached a level which had never been reached in the past, while prices began to follow a declining trend. This marked inversion of trends was due to the fact that, for the first time, the primary sector was able to expand production sufficiently to meet the added demand deriving from the population increase. Unfortunately we do not possess detailed statistical data which would enable us to assess exactly the extent of the changes and to carry out a detailed analysis of production levels in the period. The methods used by experts in the subject seek to provide a general picture, although it is far from complete. Nonetheless, in the period 1700-1850 both the figures based on population growth and those concerning the level of output, show that production rose from two and half to three times. The main factor contributing to the growth of production was the rise in productivity rather than the expansion of cultivable land, although it is true that the size of cultivated, arable land doubled in the period 1700-1815.

According to Overton, the increase in agricultural production was related to six well-defined variables: land reclamation, or rather improvement in the quality of land through greater capital investment, conversion of meadows

and woodland into arable land, reduction in the size of fallow land, introduction of fodder plants, changes in crop systems so as to ensure a better balance between crops destined for foodstuffs and, lastly, regional crop specialisation. Land reclamation began in the mid-fifteenth century but the process intensified at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was necessary to make a prompt response to the needs arising from population growth. The conversion of meadow-land and woodland into arable fields was also an important factor, although the timing and the extent of the process is difficult to quantify exactly; recent research has, in fact, scaled down the impact of such changes. The progressive reduction in fallow land was strictly related to new crop rotations through the introduction of new plants such as rape and clover. On this point figures are revealing: Gregory King estimated that fallow land in England and Wales accounted for 20 percent of arable land in 1690, a proportion which gradually decreased, falling to as low as 4 percent in 1871. Alongside new rotation systems, the composition of products destined as foodstuffs changed. The two main changes were the decline in the cultivation of sesame and the introduction of the potato which became increasingly important in the diet of the poorest classes, especially after bad harvests when it was crucial to find valid alternatives to cereals. Lastly, crop specialisation served to create a better process of integration between different areas so that shortages could be compensated for and the way prepared for overcoming the subsistence economy definitively.

However, the agricultural changes described above need to be set in the wider context of institutional change which was of great importance in the period under study. At the beginning of the seventeenth century markets were strictly controlled by a series of government and local regulations which hampered free trading. As Overton points out, although they could be considered "open" they were not "free" because prices were often imposed from above and were not the result of direct negotiation between supply and demand. Therefore, the main innovations introduced in the period 1500-1850, all closely related to one another, helped to remove the constraints that restricted trade and to bring to the forefront a new figure, the intermediary, who would make it possible to develop a market which was truly free. The driving force behind this change was once again the population, but other factors also played a part such as the high levels of urbanisation in parts of England, and the increase in the ratio of workers living in the countryside who were not engaged in agricultural activity. In particular, Overton points to the striking demographic growth of London in the early modern period: the size of the population rose from 55,000 in 1500 to 200,000 in 1600 and continued to rise to 575,000 in 1700 and 960,000 in 1801. Moreover the demand for food in London increased since average per capita consumption in the capital was twice the level of consumption in the rest of the country. The progressive widening of markets and the removal of barriers which

obstructed free trade averted the risk of cyclical and often dire famines.

Alongside these institutional changes there were also changes which radically transformed the structure of landownership. In the period under study arable land throughout England became subject to private property rights. This was the period in which enclosures spread and, while the term enclosure has been overused, it is still very important since it comprises a number of highly significant processes: the stabilisation of private property, the ending of common rights, the transformation of traditional agricultural systems, the merger or incorporation of a number of farms and a radical change in land use. Recent research has revised the traditional view that the enclosure movement became more intense from the mid-eighteenth century onwards and shows on the contrary that enclosures were more frequent in the seventeenth century when around 24 percent of land was enclosed compared to only 2 percent in the previous century and 13 percent and 11 percent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. The spread of enclosure was accompanied by a radical change in social structure, since it involved the confiscation and sale of monastic land to private citizens, the rise of the gentry, an increase in the number of large farms and the decline of small-holders. In particular Overton draws attention to "the plunder of the church:" around 1530 church lands yielded an overall income of about £400,000, a very substantial figure if one considers the fact that crown lands only produced an income of about £40,000. Around half of this wealth came from monasteries and was confiscated following their dissolution under Henry VIII. In a very short period, this enormous wealth was transferred to private citizens, above all the gentry. Taking up Tawney's thesis published in 1941 and summarised in the title "rise of the gentry," Overton observes that in the sixteenth century a new middle class of capitalist farmers grew up while the old aristocracy declined. This caused a significant shift in the balance of economic power between the various classes which had a major political consequence and was to lead to the English Revolution.

This book is a very useful point of reference for scholars interested in the subject. In particular, Overton deserves praise for his ability to organise and reconstruct a real history of English agriculture with a sufficiently wide time span., probably the first of its kind to appear in British historiography. He shows that such a construction does not necessarily have to be subordinate to the processes affecting other economic sectors, such as the industrial sector, which has all too often been the case with studies that produce a view of history which is excessively coloured by the history of industry.

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G. TORTELLA, *El desarrollo de la España contemporánea. Historia económica de los siglos XIX y XX*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1995, pp. XXVIII + 429.

The economic history of contemporary Spain has long been studied by historians who have focused on those aspects of production which are perceived to be most directly linked to modernisation and progress. With regard to the nineteenth century, stressing aspects such as the industrial and commercial growth of the Catalonian and Basque region, the creation of large private banks and the building of the railway network, and on the other hand, viewing everything else indiscriminately in a context of backwardness, has often led to portraying Spanish economic development in the nineteenth and twentieth century as a discontinuous and geographically disparate process.

In this book on the history of the Spanish economy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Gabriel Tortella has brought together and developed the studies conducted on this subject during the last thirty years, producing a very rich picture which, without underestimating the importance of delay factors and obstacles that have affected the process, seeks to link backwardness and modernisation within a single unitary framework.

From a political stance, both the beginning and the end of the turbulent nineteenth century were marked by internal instability and bloody defeats in the colonies which, although very traumatic at the time from an economic and especially psychological point of view, in the long term actually had the beneficial effect of freeing the country from a burden that had become impossible to sustain. The twentieth century, on the other hand, was characterised by decades of rapid growth, followed by the disastrous economic policy of autarky under the early years of Franco which were to lead to the Civil War and a period of great continuity. Tortella points out, however, that the main political events in contemporary Spain were heavily influenced by economic developments which really shaped the country's history.

The economic history of contemporary Spain is divided clearly into the nineteenth century, marked by slow growth and progressive retardation compared with the European average, and the twentieth century, marked by rapid growth and recovery of most of the ground lost in the previous century. The nineteenth century may, in turn, be sub-divided into two periods: during the first half - up to the end of the first Carlist War in the 1840 - the economy remained fairly stagnant; it was only in the period 1840-60 that a slow recovery began before gradually accelerating and turning into the rapid development of the twentieth century.

On the surface, the twentieth century has similar characteristics to those of the nineteenth century, albeit on a greater scale: relative stagnation in the first half was followed by more marked growth in the second. Yet, on closer analysis, the stagnation of the first half was the result of rapid growth in the

period 1900-1930 and decline due to the combined effects of the Great Depression, the Civil War and the subsequent decade of recession. From the mid-1950s, a process of economic growth took place which appears rapid when compared with the growth rates recorded by other industrialised countries in the previous periods.

If we consider growth trends in the two centuries overall, we might be led to see a single pattern of growth starting in the 1840s and continuing to the present day, which was interrupted only by a short period from 1930 to 1950 for the reasons already mentioned. However, Tortella warns us that this continuity is deceiving. In the nineteenth century the Spanish economy was mainly tied to activities carried on in traditional ways; it was only in the twentieth century that a structural transformation took place which drove Spain towards industrialisation and modernisation. The main results achieved by Spain in the nineteenth century, therefore, were essentially the elimination of certain obstacles on the path to industrialisation through important changes in the country's social and institutional structure.

In this connection Tortella finds it very illuminating to compare Italian and Portuguese economic trends with Spanish trends. By doing so he takes up Sidney Pollard's thesis which argues that the ways to European industrialisation can be better understood if we take a regional rather than national perspective. Starting from the concept of regional development, understood as both intranational and supranational development, Tortella goes against the view adopted by Molinas and Prados de la Escosura and reinstates the idea of a "Latin" way to industrialisation, showing the similarities between the three countries of south-western Europe since the nineteenth century.

From this perspective, ignoring the distinctive peculiarities of each country's economic development, Tortella seeks to overcome the traditional theories which led historians to ascribe Italy's nineteenth-century retardation to free-trade policies, Portuguese retardation to British trade imperialism and Spanish retardation to the way agrarian reform was carried out. Instead Tortella wishes to show that the slow development of these countries was due firstly to heavy imbalances in their tax regimes and disorder in government finances.

From this broader perspective, which spans two centuries and which compares the development paths taken by these three countries of south-western Europe, Tortella carries out a historical analysis of economic sectors and examines the relationship between economic history and political events. In synthesis, Tortella focuses his analysis on the factors which slowed down growth, mainly the structure of the agrarian sector, on the institutional factors which enabled growth to take place, above all, on the role of the state in first promoting literacy and education and then in forming human capital, in other words, those factors which enabled the Spanish economy to catch up on structural change.

Examining retardation factors, Tortella points out that, at the beginning of the contemporary era, Spain had not still undergone any profound agricultural transformation. This was due firstly to the limited diffusion of technological innovations in the Mediterranean area which had set in motion the agricultural revolution in the last century of the early modern era in northern Europe. Furthermore, the peninsula's very configuration, the height and aridity of the Meseta Central, have always hampered communications, isolating most of the country from trade and the circulation of ideas. In Spain geography and culture have for centuries combined to hinder modernisation.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the primary sector absorbed a high proportion of the country's active population, around two thirds, with very low productivity. The low level of productivity, in turn, kept the average Spaniard's diet at a subsistence level, with poorer cereals gradually being replaced by wheat and a slow diffusion of potatoes and maize. At the same time the agricultural sector never acted as a market for industry nor as a source of capital for the modernisation process, while high mortality rates and relatively low birth rates failed to generate any significant emigration from the countryside to towns, where a fairly small percentage of the population resided. It was only as a result of the competition from foreign cereals at the end of the century that Spanish peasants moved into the towns and went abroad, reducing pressure on the land. For the same reasons, whereas according to the classical theory of the industrial revolution the primary sector has, in the early stages, to produce a large volume of exports, for the whole of the nineteenth century Spanish agriculture made only a very modest contribution to the country's trade balance.

Very closely connected to agricultural conditions was the structure of landownership. The existence of extensive ecclesiastical lands and the effects of the attempts at agrarian reform gave rise to the twofold problem of the latifundium and small and scattered holdings with a class of absentee landowners on the one hand, and a class of small-holders on the other, who were too poor and whose farms were too small for carrying out any major change in production. Added to this already unfavourable situation were the limited results of the diffusion of share-cropping contracts.

Among the factors which caused backwardness we should certainly include the population's low literacy rate: up to 1900 about a half of Spaniards did not know how to read or write. Throughout the nineteenth century the state did no more than join forces with the Church to increase the number of educational institutions. At the same time, as Tortella points out, there was also a problem in the low demand for education since an enormously ignorant population did not perceive the advantages of literacy and did not press for it. It was only in the twentieth century that the state committed itself more fully to promoting schools and that educational standards grew with a very clear parallel trend in per capita income.

The turn of the century is seen as the crucial period for understanding the

factors which enabled the Spanish economy to start eliminating the structural blockages that accumulated in the nineteenth century. Tortella stresses the importance of competition from Russian and American grain in breaking the vicious circle which kept Spanish peasants tied to the land and a system of low-production cereal cultivation. Urbanisation and emigration from the countryside to the towns and the transition to intensive wine, oil, fruit and vegetable production, which had a very rich and responsive market in north Europe, marked the beginning of a phase of growth in Spain which the customs barriers that had been set up to reduce the effects of competition were unable to stop.

The rapid development which took place in the first three decades of the twentieth century, providing for a more homogeneous process of industrialisation in the second half of the century, rested on an abundant and cheap labour supply in the towns, on the role of emigrants' remittances in capital formation and making it possible to purchase technology and on the responsiveness of European markets in absorbing primary and semi-finished goods produced in Spain, which thus enjoyed the double advantage of low wages and a Ricardian situation as regards rents.

Just from this rapid overview, which for brevity's sake has not dwelt on the most recent phase in this process, namely the growth recorded in the last fifteen years of Franco's rule, we can see that Tortella's book is the fruit of extensive research on the history of Spain's economic development and provides an original and systematic interpretation of the country's economic and social development from the end of the eighteenth century almost up to the dawn of the twenty-first century. Tortella throws light on aspects of this process which have not been studied or have received very little attention up till now. He shows clearly that, in the European context of industrialisation, Spain belonged to the group of latecomer countries, who were slow to industrialise in the nineteenth century but who grew rapidly in the twentieth century, and that from its position as a declining colonial power Spain developed to become a full member of the fifteen most industrialised countries in the world.

Despite the great progress, there are still numerous obstacles to Spain's joining the group of leading countries in the European Union and in his conclusion Tortella reminds Spanish economists of the usefulness of drawing on the lessons of Spanish history in the last two centuries in order to understand today's problems.

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