

Reviews

Marco Moroni, *Nel medio Adriatico. Risorse, traffici, città fra basso Medioevo ed età moderna* [In the Middle Adriatic. Resources, Transport, Cities Between the Late Middle Ages and Modern Period]. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2012. Pages 404.

The series *Territorio e ricerca*, launched only two years ago by the Department of Social Sciences of the Faculty of Economy, University of Marche at Ancona, already includes six books dealing with the economic and social micro-processes in the communities of the two Adriatic coasts examined from the long-run historical perspective. After his *Tra le due sponde dell'Adriatico. Rapporti economici, culturali e devozionali in età moderna* (Napoli: ESI, 2010), Marco Moroni here re-establishes himself as an authority on the events that marked the common past on the level of economic ties, considering them a concrete pledge of the future coexistence in the European Union.

No doubt this work reflects the author's deep concern for his country's long recession and his efforts to assume a part of the responsibility for its development, recurrently insisting on Italy's return to the sea and the Mediterranean as a natural and somewhat neglected environment. By doing so, he holds his hand out to the peoples from the other shore, viewing their prosperity an essential prerequisite for further development and well-being of Italy itself. That is the central idea that permeates each of the twelve chapters of the present volume. Although lavishly wrapped in historic fabric, well-grounded in a vast array of archival sources and a maze of secondary literature, it is an outgrowth of Moroni's earlier research focused on the problems of industrialisation of the so-called Third Italy. This social term was coined back in the 1970s to acknowledge the sweeping success of small businesses which became the long-awaited heralds of economic change, the "third pole" according to the traditionally poor Italian south and just as traditionally developed north, the haven of huge companies

with thousands of employees. Therefore the Third Italy became recognised as a driving engine on the road towards speedy development and the country's growth on the whole. According to the author's well-argued assessment, it draws its roots from the centuries-old Adriatic trade and from the unbalanced yet long-time development of smaller towns in the hinterland (*sottovento*) of the western Adriatic coast. *Sottovento* thus inspired the author to embark upon the interpretation of the historical changes and their reflections in the current circumstances. With this thread he has woven a valuable collection here reviewed. Although most of the papers have been published in Italian journals over the last ten years, no doubt within the mentioned context they are worthy of a close re-reading.

Three texts, however, have been written as contributions to this collection—the chapters on trade, on salt and soap production, along with the chapter on the towns in the Adriatic. The chapters are arranged by theme, beginning with a wide-angle theme of "Resources", the author singles out "Salt" and "Fishing", and then across "Transportation" and "Merchants" arrives at some concrete forms of production and trade, as discussed in the chapters "Soap" and "Wax". The closing part of the book offers panoramic overviews of the typical urban environment of the central western Adriatic. The chapters "Port" and "Town" discuss the common features of the smaller and larger settlements of this region across a chronological flow from the Middle Ages to the post-Napoleon era, three towns being given special prominence (Ancona, Rimini, Pesaro). Although the dawn of the twentieth century saw fairly little of the once traditional occupations and interests, commercial affairs and ties (due mainly to the specific circumstances and fundamental political changes in both the Adriatic and even more on the Apennine Peninsula), the author argues that old traditions at least prompted if not directly helped the great economy boost in the latter half of the twentieth century through the phenomenon of the *Third Italy*. The sea as a warrant of good transportation links and virtually an inexhaustible source of the vital goods, and on the other side coupled

with established success of the small business firms, fully justify such an approach which, by elucidating the historical events, points to the solutions to the current problems.

The book's subtitle "Sources, transport and towns between the late Middle Ages and Modern Age" tends to suggest the main focus of the author's attention: natural resources deserve more prominence than the mere exchange of people and goods; the sea itself is the greatest wealth. Indeed, the first associations with the sea wealth are the fish and salt. These goods are essential in the commercial exploitation of the sea resources today, just as they had been in the period covered by this book. Not only has the practice survived but so have their legal frames: the author points to the provisions which regulated overfishing by introducing seasonal prohibition of fishing in the Venetian lagoons which was known to extend for several months, in that the ban also concerned trawl nets, as their use represented a serious threat to the juvenile fish stock. With a useful remark about the fish stocks of the Adriatic being the richest of all the peripheral seas of the Mediterranean, it is quite clear that by the start of the Modern Age the authorities were already aware that these resources could easily be exhausted, which resulted in organised fish farming in the ponds of the Po basin. Consumption growth was correlated to a demographic increase in the eighteenth century and an average consumption of 10kg of fish per capita. The records of the preservation of fish in snow and ice and the appearance of persons being granted concession on the snow and ice in Ancona, where a part of an abandoned fortress was used as storage space, draw a close parallel with this kind of trade in the Dubrovnik region and the ice supplied from the Konavle mountains in the medieval and early modern period. However, the later development of the northern Adriatic headed towards the drying up of the marshlands, and their transformation into health and world famous tourist resorts. Immediate production was no longer profitable. This is further supported by the fact that the once impressive fishing fleets (so influential that in the local idiom a term *gente*

di mare was minted to describe the whole stratum of fishermen and owners of fishing boats) were gradually replaced by large and modern ships.

Rapid technological development and the desire for profit opened the way not only to the environmental but also social disbalance, disregarding the responsibility to give and not only to take. The author notes that at the dawn of the modern period the tonnage of the fishing ships maintained the value it had in the previous centuries, with an observation that the number of their owners decreased and of the fishermen increased. The mentioned accumulation of capital did not favour the development of this type of economy, which finally resulted in the disappearance of "the men of the sea" in the 1930s. Another economy closely dependent on the sea, salt production, underwent a similar experience. He explained the market laws of this strategically important product on the examples of trade in the Papal State. By a bull of Pope Martin V in 1423, the State was granted exclusive right to purchase salt and later sell it at a certain profit. The author has not overlooked the notable role of the Ragusan vessels in salt trade primarily in the southern Adriatic, as well the expansion of this trade towards the import from Ibiza and the supply of the Marche region. Unable to prevent this, Venice suffered a heavy blow especially with the fall of Cyprus in 1571, facing the final defeat in the eighteenth century when Trieste became the main port for salt trade in the Adriatic.

A similar fate befell other raw materials and industrial products, soap and wax being in the focus here. Although very lucrative and in specific circumstances making record profits, soap trade was subject to shrinking due mainly to natural limitations. Lower olive yields from the 1620s onwards and a strong competition of the English and Dutch merchants who bought olive oil wholesale in Puglia resulted in the fact that the old masters of soap manufacture, the Venetians, tried in vain to compensate on Corfu and the Ionian Islands the positions they had lost in the mentioned southern Italian region. By doing so they merely postponed an inevitable ruin in this type of economy as well, until they finally

withdrew before the advancing southern France and Marseille as a new centre of soap production. Unlike soap, wax made smaller yet very safe profit. It was broadly used in various types of manufacture (from coin minting and bell casting to a variety of metal casts). The volume of wax trade in the Adriatic, with import into Italian ports from Levant, north Africa, Venetian Dalmatia, Dubrovnik and the Habsburg lands, has been carefully surveyed in tabular form.

The history of Dubrovnik has not been neglected in this work, but the author rightly warns that it has already been thoroughly examined, while the connections between norther Dalmatia, Zadar and Pag in particular, and the neighbouring Italian coast remain to be studied. While writing on Dubrovnik, that is why he mainly centred on the side remarks pertaining to the participation of the Ragusan merchants in the maritime trade, some more light being shed on the individuals and their personal contribution to the mutual relations. One of the figures deserving special attention was Markantun Gozze, who established himself in Pesaro in the middle of the sixteenth century and as an expression of his strong connection with this town wrote *The Description of Pesaro*, still in manuscript. Among wealthy Ragusan merchants were also the brothers Nikola and Luka Caboga, trading in silver and wax in the first half of the fifteenth century, in Venice mainly, but equally successful throughout the smaller port towns of the western Adriatic. Shifting to ecclesiastical history, the author offered another example of personal connections between the two coasts through the role of the Ragusan archbishops Giacomo from Recanati (1440-1460) and his later successor Giovanni Venerio (1470-1490). Certainly, within the context of the relations between the two coasts another important episode is the early fifteenth-century work of Juraj Dalmatinac (Georgius Dalmaticus) on the construction of the *Loggia dei mercanti*, designed as a meeting place of the merchants in Ancona.

The author's interest in the economy of the Eastern Adriatic and its hinterland in the fifteenth century places emphasis on the rivalry between the fairs of Split and Trogir, the first on the feast

of St. Domnius promoted and protected by the doge of Venice, while the citizens of Trogir fruitlessly called upon the pope's privilege in an attempt to hold their fair on the same day as that of Split. However, the author's attention on the west Adriatic towns tends to dominate, especially those in the Marche and Romagna regions. By elucidating them through historical changes, he has positioned himself critically towards the older Italian historiography originating back from the time of Risorgimento. He argues that in the sixteenth century the history of Ancona was deeply influenced by two formally adverse events: massive Ottoman invasion of the Balkans and central Europe which in 1525 led to an agreement with Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, and the seizure of the town by the papal army in 1532. This had direct consequences on the status of the religious communities: in Ancona the Orthodox Greeks held the church of St. Anna by permission of the pope, while in Bari they had their chapel in the church of St. Nicholas. Pronounced migrations have been examined as short-term, periodic phenomena (during large pilgrimages as, for instance, to the Marian sanctuary in Loreto, to which as many as 200,000 pilgrims journeyed in 1600), but also as permanent changes in the population of a certain region, as the migration of the Christian population of Albanian, Greek or Slav origin during the Ottoman invasions in the fifteenth century to the neighbouring Italian coast and further inland.

The port of Ancona attracted also Jewish merchants and *conversos/maranos*, but in 1556 the town became the scene of religious persecution, when 25 maranos accused of heresy were burned to death, while the remaining members of the Portugese Jewish community fled. Because of that, Jewish merchants throughout the Mediterranean transferred their business to the rivaling Pesaro. An attempt at boycott temporarily halted the development and prosperity of Ancona, bearing witness to the influence of the powerful Jewish community in the middle of the sixteenth century. Yet the action finally failed because of the vitality of the closely-knit web of the smaller and larger urban centres that actually depended one upon

another and shared the same economic fate. The author emphasises here the marked contribution of fairs to an elaborate economic landscape of the entire region.

An almost absolute monopoly of Dubrovnik on the import into the port of Ancona prompted Venice towards the revitalisation of the Split port at the end of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, difficult circumstances which marked the end of the sixteenth century—crop failure and insecure sea passage due to frequent corsair attacks and wars with the Ottomans, the outbreaks of epidemics in the northern Italy which also spread to the region of Ancona—greatly undermined the holding of fairs. However, there is evidence that the Ragusan merchants regularly visited the fair in Senigallia in the eighteenth century, whose sudden rise the author compared with the development of Trieste which from 1719 enjoyed the most favourable status as a free port under the Habsburg protection.

The Adriatic being a “sea of towns” is a justifiable observation. On average, the number of their inhabitants did not exceed 10,000—the size of Dubrovnik, with the exception of Venice (c. 100,000), Ferrara (up to 30,000 by the start of the sixteenth century), probably Bari (in the early modern period increased from 6,000 to 14,000) and Ancona. Well-documented and extensively described are the problems of the Rimini port, exposed to high tides and sand deposits from the inland. At the close of the sixteenth century, upon the prompting of the pope this problem was seriously attended to and engineers from Rome, Ferrara and Ancona were engaged on the project, but the changes in climate coupled with other problems made the port “almost unusable” in the 1630s. Among the experts who contributed to the solution of navigation along the channel constantly obstructed by sand deposits was Ruder Bošković.

The mosaic of Pesaro is complemented by an insight into the beginnings of manufacture in that city, and the production of glass, crystal and tiles in the second half of the eighteenth century. Although these and similar manufactures came to an end by the start of the nineteenth century, and thus had nothing do with the city’s

further development, their very existence pointed to the favourable economic climate which served as basis for later development. Or, paraphrasing the author, they pointed to the maritime potential of the Third Italy.

Today there is virtually no challenge in writing about the Adriatic as a meeting point of Roman and Slavic component, and the area of the coexistence of the three dominant monotheistic religions. This volume, therefore, offers a fresh view of the current moment and proposes the path towards future social and economic development by probing into the past. A result of long-time experience and devoted work in both teaching and research, this historiographic contribution of Professor Moroni is primarily an important step in the discourse on the Adriatic’s common future.

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Филипп де Диверсис, *Описание славного города Дубровника*, перевод с сербскохорватского языка [Philip de Diversis, *Description of the Famous City of Dubrovnik*], комментарии Н. П. Мананчиковой, Воронежский государственный университет, Издательско-полиграфический центр Воронежского государственного университета, 2012. Pages 160.

Philip Diversi, Italian humanist who taught in Dubrovnik in the middle of the fifteenth century, wrote a small yet valuable book *Situs Aedificiorum, Politiae et Laudabilium Consuetudinum Inclytae Civitatis Ragusii (Description of the Buildings, Polity and Commendable Customs of the Famous City of Dubrovnik)*. Following faithfully the canons of the medieval literary genre known as *laudes civitatum*, in the prologue the author explains the content, purpose and goal of his work, and then in four sections divided into 49 chapters describes the city’s location, its buildings, political system and the customs of its citizens.