

Lessons from history: 19th horticultural techniques and food systems in the Mediterranean

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Winegrowing and landowner nobility: the challenge of vine diseases in 19th century Lombardy

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Part of a broader ongoing research, the communication aims to analyse the challenge of vine diseases to the rich viticulture in Lombardy (northern Italy) during the 19th century.

At the time, wine was a real food for people, and Lombardy produced a high volume and variety of types, mostly for the local market. The urban elite, particularly the landowner nobility, controlled a large part of the production. As the region was transforming into an industrialised area, with an increasing population and consumers, wine selling became an important source of gain. The international demand was also expanding. Therefore, prominent landowners interested in new techniques promoted agronomic studies, congresses, and institutions. Embryonic geography of the various Italian qualities of wines was already emerging and would influence subsequent developments.

However, since the mid of century, new diseases, following one another, affected the vines plants (downy and powdery mildew, phylloxera) and a huge scientific and practical effort was needed to overcome them. In the end, some Lombardy areas abandoned winegrowing, while others costly improved the quality and quantity of their production. What were the consequences of this challenge on local farming systems and horticultural techniques, and on wine production? The communication will try to answer focusing on regional nobility estates.

winegrowing; horticultural techniques; vine diseases; nobility; Lombardy

From farmers to Mediterranean agronomy expert: The Mitra agriculture school 1926-1974 (Évora, Portugal)

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This article addresses the problem of Portuguese technical training in agriculture, in the Estado Novo years, as an alternative for professional training for individuals who financially or intellectually did not have access to the Lisbon agronomy higher education. The objective is to understand the technical education from the experience of Escola de Regentes Agrícolas da Mitra in terms of meeting the aspirations of employability, socioeconomic emancipation, and difficulties in accessing higher education. It was chosen an oral memory methodology and documentary research with qualitative analysis, using school manuals and school documents.

The results indicate that the professional training promoted by Mitra in Évora brought a high employability to students who concluded their studies. The conclusions indicate that in the decades studied here, this type of education provided social ascension for young people who were looking for a profession and wanted to enter the world of private jobs or civil servant work. It was found that some students were already hired by large companies, like CUF, while they were still in the classroom.

agronomy; education; Évora; Alentejo

The identity of olive growing in the Algarve: ancestry, science and landscape

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Focusing on olive cultivation in the Algarve in southern Portugal, this paper tackles the change of traditional practices into olive's intensive growth and how this has impacted on the environment and on the interface between man and landscape. It aims to understand the scientific and historical technique of olive cultivation in the Algarve from the perspective of the history of science and technology along with its interface with environment and landscape studies in the nineteenth-century.

L. Columella, a Latin agronomist who wrote about it in Antiquity, described a rudimentary method of producing olive oil, called *canalis et solea*, which consisted of stepping on the olives with shoes on a piece of wood from which the liquid was drained out. The same technique is described in a 16th century Portuguese book, entitled *Corografia do Reino do Algarve*, written by Frei de São José. Until today this same technique is used in small communities in Portugal. However, these traditional methods are almost disappearing due to the rise of intensive olive cultivation. On the other hand, the traditional olive oil production cooperatives are valued and are in the strategic debate on the production of extra virgin olive oil, an overrated item worldwide. This proposal aims to provide a debate on the preservation of the identity of the territory and its sustainable productive character.

olive cultivation; landscape; history of science and technology

From a real fig landscape to a virtual orange landscape

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The Algarve orange became a new brand for the region since orange groves have been identified as the typical landscape. Not only juice brands such as Compal have created a specific juice made of the Algarve orange, but there are several sites promoting this new brand (“laranja do Algarve”) and even touristic visit tours to the Algarve orange groves (“Rota da Laranja”) are offered as an alternative to beach tourism.

Orange trees have been in the Iberian Peninsula in sites of religious and political power at least since the 9th century, to such an extent that the orange tree became almost seen as an autochthonous species side by side with other Mediterranean trees such as olive, vine, carob, almond, and fig tree. This successful history had a setback as mildew affected the Algarve orange groves in the nineteenth century. Orange landscapes almost disappeared, but recently European policies have funded orange growth in the Algarve based on the assumption that citrus was the region's predominant product.

However, I argue that rather than an orange landscape the Algarve was a fig landscape, and this does not resort exclusively from the 19th-century setback. In fact, figs were “the Algarve bread” and their exports were much higher than oranges during the early modern period and nineteenth century.

Orange landscape; Fig landscape; landscape identity; Algarve; traditional practices

Carob: An important forgotten nutrient

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Looking at the Portuguese scenario and the Algarve region specifically, this article seeks to highlight and discuss a particular fruit that is often forgotten: the carob. For this, through mainly 19th-century treatises, it is highlighted how the carob tree is often among the most widespread in Portugal – as Silva Lopes report in *Corografia: ou, Memoria economica, estadistica, e topografico do Reino do Algarve* (1839) and Figueiredo in *Manual de Arboricultura. Tratado da cultura das arvores fructiferas* (1875). Along with an early discussion of the dissemination of carob in Portugal and following a so-called *cultura da alfarrobeira* (carob culture), more precisely biological issues on the one hand and related to the agricultural aspect on the other are developed, as for example José Maria Grande discusses in *Guia e manual do cultivados: ou elementos de agricultura* (1849). Here some essential properties of carob emerge, defining its nature primarily among fruit trees with important nutritional values and its capacity to flourish in fallow land.

history of science; carob; agriculture