
RESEÑAS

VALLEJO POUSADA, Rafael, *Historia del turismo en España: 1928-1962. Economía, política y administración turística*, Madrid, Silex, 2022, 742 págs., ISBN: 978-84-19077-00-4.

For about two decades, Spanish historians have been actively engaged in extensive research activities, aimed at understanding the evolution of tourism in Spain. In many cases, these projects receive public support, a noteworthy aspect, for a production of numerous and high-quality contributions. Like Switzerland, Italy, and Austria, economic historians in Spain have spearheaded this field of research, followed by social and cultural historians.

Rafael Vallejo Pousada is a researcher positioned in this positive era, combining expertise in Economic history with that of Institutional history. This interdisciplinary approach is crucial, because in Europe historical research dedicated to tourism has reached a considerable level of maturity from economic and social perspectives, but still exhibits significant gaps in the realms of institutional and political history.

Vallejo Pousada, a specialist in Economic history and institutions, provides a solid, significant, and innovative contribution to the history of tourism in Spain with this book. It is a robust work founded on primary sources, historical literature, and an extensive bibliography produced during the ongoing research season. Importantly, it serves as a comprehensive review and synthesis of the current state of studies on various themes, making it a valuable tool for comparative research. Furthermore, it is innovative in explicitly adhering to a complex vision of tourism that integrates economic and social data into institutional history, tracing some elements of political history where our knowledge remains fragmented.

The book is structured into four sections analyzing tourism in Spain during the specified period from 1928 to 1962: the first focusing on the analysis of the history of institutions, the second on tourism economy, the third on the public system, and the fourth on the private sector: agen-

cies, the hotel industry, and extra-hotel accommodations.

In reality Vallejo Pousada's analyses start from the early 20th century when Spain, compared to the European tourist system, appeared both backward and emerging, according to a felicitous expression of the Author [R. Vallejo Pousada, *Spain in international tourism: a backward and emerging country (1900-1939)*, in Gregorini, G. & Semeraro, R. (eds.), *Turismo 4.0. Storia, digitalizzazione, territorio*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2021, pp. 65-94]. This interpretation is entirely acceptable, because tourism was not unknown to Spain: recent research offers a vast bibliography analyzing the reception of stay practices at baths and sea, for instance, in the Bay of Biscay and the Cantabrian Sea since the mid-19th century. From the 1870s, Spain had been involved in the accelerated mobility of the first globalization until the outbreak of World War I.

Based on those stimuli, certainly received with difficulty due to the overall low level of services, it is natural that Spain, already from the early 20th century, began to engage with tourism with a certain awareness, albeit intermittently and across a patchy geography.

Therefore, Vallejo Pousada's book only theoretically starts from 1928 when the establishment of the Patronato Nacional de turismo and Juntas Provinciales inaugurated, in Spain as well, an awareness of the importance of tourism for the governance of the nation. From that moment, the Author meticulously describes the continuous adjustments of the institutional and administrative framework to the forms that tourism takes in the country, driven by ongoing social, economic, and political transformations. Indeed, as explicitly stated by the Author in his "Introducción", the effort is to interpret the evolution of tourism in Spain by relating it to the international context of the rest of Europe and the world.

Vallejo Pousada's meticulous deep search and analysis work showcase that Spain's engagement with tourism wasn't just a response to the international tourist market driven by major agents and grand hotels. It also involved internal tourist practices taking shape in vibrant urban areas like Barcelona. The book meticulously details the efforts of public administration and the insight of individual actors trying to understand and govern a phenomenon emerging amid political difficulties and continuous institutional transformations.

The richness of data and interpretations offered by the volume is not easily summarized, but Vallejo's strong thesis is that tourism in Spain did not start with the *Planes de desarrollo* and the opening of the national economy in the 1960s. Instead, he argues that tourism in Spain took shape from the early 20th century. To support this hypothesis, the Author minutely analyzes many indicators, including the impact of tourism in the media, up to Spain's recognition in international specialized publications. Vallejo is certain that the pre-Civil War years are crucial and contribute to the formation of what he terms the «País Turístico».

Carlos Manera, in the "Prologo", appropriately emphasizes the values of the book: chronological depth, the ability to propose a convincing periodization, and a broad view of the Spanish case. These elements allow Vallejo Pousada to define three theses: first, that tourism arises from a past that must be considered, having substance, and not confined to the massification phase of the 1950s; second, that the development of the tertiary sector presupposes business networks and a labor market shift from manufacturing and agriculture to services; and third, that formulating tourism policy influences economic policy.

Chapters dedicated to institutional and administrative events of tourism in Spain confirm a national narrative characterized by continuous governance experiments influenced, in many aspects, by the desire to emulate solutions devised by other more advanced European tourist nations, such as France and Italy. However, these models can only serve as references, having been developed in different political contexts and notably for service systems at much higher levels of de-

velopment. The distinctive features of the Spanish case emerge more clearly in Vallejo's analyses of the private sector.

The chapter dedicated to travel agencies traces the origins of small businesses that felt the urgency to respond to a growing demand for distraction and escape expressed by urban centers. Vallejo analyzes the penetration of foreign agencies in the early 20th century and the birth of the first Spanish agencies, operating in conjunction with railway and shipping companies. These agencies demonstrated the ability to grow by accommodating an increasing demand for excursions, becoming a phenomenon of great importance for cities like Barcelona, for example. Using primarily periodicals sources, Vallejo identifies the 1920s and 1930s as the era of rise of small transport businesses capable of supporting a new tourist mobility that was interrupted by the Civil War and the challenges posed by World War II but constituted an important experience to build on in the 1960s.

Staying within the realm of the private sector, equally interesting is the chapter dedicated to the hospitality system. In addition to providing statistics and geographical maps illustrating its territorial distribution, the Author also delves into the strategies implemented by businesses to meet a continuously increasing demand. The pages dedicated to extra-hotel accommodations are crucial, as the history of tourism in various European national cases unfortunately still lacks in this area.

Finally, it's worth noting that the text includes some highly interesting images sourced from public archives and specialized periodicals. In this regard, Vallejo Pousada also provides thought-provoking insights into the history of iconography for tourism, which extends beyond promotional purposes to encompass imagery designed for commercial and institutional information dissemination. The book is enriched with an extensive and up-to-date bibliography, along with a compelling final appendix. In this section, Vallejo presents a significant number of tables that systematize the most significant data related to individual chapters. This tool offers comprehensive series of diverse data concerning public institutions, revenues from

foreign tourism, investments in different provinces, events and congresses, data on hotel assets, and much more, spanning the timeframe considered in the book.

Historia del turismo en España: 1928-1962 by Rafael Vallejo Pousada certainly establishes itself as a reference point and a comparative tool for those engaged in the history of tourism in Europe.

Annunziata Berrino
University of Naples Federico II
Annunziata.berrino@unina.it