

The Economic History of Italy 1860-1990

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Abstract

This book gives a full account of the economic and social history of Italy since unification (1860), with an introduction covering the previous period since the Middle Ages. The Economic History of Italy represents a scholarly and authoritative account of Italy's progress from a rural economy to an industrialized nation. The book makes a broad division of the period into three parts: the take-off (1860-1913), the consolidation in the midst of two wars and a world depression (1914-47), and the great expansion (1948-1990). Professor Zamagni traces the growth of industrialization, and argues that despite several advanced areas Italy only became an industrialized nation after the Second World War, and that during the 1980s the South was still clearly behind the rest of the country. Zamagni analyses data both from a macroeconomic position, in looking at the growth of the finance sector, or the role of the State, and from a microeconomic position when she draws conclusions from the changing population structure, or from the actions of individual businesses. Professor Zamagni reveals that even though the population more than doubled during this time the level of national income rose 19-fold, to move Italy from a peripheral status in Europe to a

central position as a prosperous country. A central theme of the book is Professor Zamagni's argument that the Italian economy has been successful not by any great individuality of its own but by being flexible enough to incorporate the successes of other countries: Japan's integrated business network, for example, or Germany's financial structure. She places the industrialization of Italy in the international context by comparing Italy's GDP and other measures of prosperity at different times to the USA, Japan, the UK, France, and Germany. The book is based on original field-work by the author, and the many detailed but small-scale studies existing in Italian. Quantitative trends are described in more than 70 tables of data, while the book provides appendices containing chronologies of main events in various sectors and biographies.

Suggested Citation

Zamagni, Vera, 1993. "[The Economic History of Italy 1860-1990](#)," [OUP Catalogue](#), Oxford University Press, number 9780198287735.

Handle: *RePEc:oxp:obooks:9780198287735*

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