

PRÓLOGO/FOREWARD/ de José Manuel Naredo al libro
WORKING LANDSCAPES OF THE SPANISH DEHESA AND THE CALIFORNIA OAK
WOODLANDS

Este libro culmina con éxito un proyecto ambicioso y es para mí un placer prologarlo, porque al converger con mi empeño de practicar una economía abierta y transdisciplinar, me ofrece la oportunidad de resaltar su interés múltiple, que trasciende por completo al del habitual “estudio de caso”. En primer lugar, el “caso” estudiado es de una riqueza y amplitud tales, que sobrepasa las fronteras de los enfoques sectoriales y parcelarios ordinarios, exigiendo la puesta en común de un amplio grupo de profesionales. Es el propósito del libro analizar y comparar el funcionamiento de dos sistemas agrarios geográficamente lejanos, pero hermanados por vínculos climáticos, ecológicos e histórico-culturales: el sistema de las *dehesas*¹ españolas y el de las californianas.

La magnitud del empeño, unido a la complejidad de los sistemas estudiados, reclama un tremendo esfuerzo de colaboración transdisciplinar. Este esfuerzo ha exigido romper, no solo el usual divorcio entre especialidades, sino también entre lenguas y países diferentes: haber conseguido un lenguaje, una metodología y un entendimiento comunes del objeto de estudio, supone un logro importante, sin precedentes en este campo². A esto se suma la voluntad compartida de medir y apoyar la argumentación con datos fiables, superando trabajosamente la carencia de información existente. Hay que valorar positivamente que los análisis contenidos en este volumen se apoyan en un enorme acopio de datos, obtenido, promovido u orientado, la mayoría de las veces, por el propio equipo investigador. Se produce, así, una fértil sinergia en la que se revalorizan mutuamente los análisis y datos muy concretos sobre productividades, procesos, rentabilidades o funciones, y las interpretaciones sobre el comportamiento conjunto y comparado de los sistemas, su evolución y perspectivas. Aunar en este contexto análisis de los orígenes históricos de los sistemas estudiados, de la evolución de la propiedad,...con investigaciones muy concretas y aplicadas sobre los elementos y las prácticas que condicionan el funcionamiento y las perspectivas de los sistemas, supone en el caso que nos ocupa un paso de gigante muy clarificador. Como no es posible, ni me corresponde, entrar aquí a valorar cuestiones de detalle, valga decir que, a mi juicio, este libro marcará un antes y un después en el estudio comparado del funcionamiento y las perspectivas de la dehesa, no solo por lo que aporta, sino por la base firme que establece para futuras investigaciones, que no podrán ignorarlo.

Al mencionado esfuerzo de análisis y acopio de información, se une otro no menos arduo de coordinación del amplio equipo de investigadores que participa en el libro. Quiero subrayar que ambos no podrían entenderse sin el rodaje previo de años de experiencia que ha venido cohesionando al grupo, y muy en particular al de los editores, a través de reuniones, encuentros e intercambios diversos en los que se han ido

¹ El mayor peso relativo de este sistema en España hizo que su denominación encontrara una palabra específica en el lenguaje habitual —la palabra *dehesa*— mientras que en el mundo anglosajón hacen falta varias para designarlo. Como se explica en el libro, precisar bien en inglés el significado de la palabra *dehesa* obliga a decir “oak woodland livestock ranch”. Se plantea aquí la paradoja de que la similitud de los sistemas agrarios no se corresponde con el divorcio lingüístico que se abre entre ambos espacios.

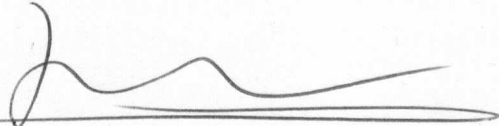
² Evidentemente, este logro de trascender la torre de Babel de especialidades, enfoques y lenguas diferentes, ha tenido que comunicar sus resultados en ese *scientific vernacular of today* que es el inglés. Pero eso no quita para que el conjunto del equipo se haya familiarizado también con el castellano, aceptando en el acervo común palabras como *dehesa*, cuando la economía y la precisión del lenguaje lo aconsejaban, en un proceso vivo de intercambio y enriquecimiento mutuos.

anudando relaciones de amistad y colaboración. El propio libro, con su amplio material fotográfico, deja traslucir una fusión de intelecto y afecto compartidos sin los cuales no habría sido posible, evidenciando que el intercambio humano incentiva la creatividad, el entusiasmo investigador y la exhuberancia y buena calidad de los resultados. Creo que también resulta ejemplar en este sentido el hecho de que el libro haya salido adelante por la voluntad libre y gratuita de sus autores, sin presupuestos, organigramas, ni promesas de promoción alguna. Lo cual suscita la paradoja opuesta de empresas investigadoras que se revelan a veces tanto o más lucrativas, cuanto menos, humana e intelectualmente, ricas y creativas.

El libro suscita también reflexiones filosóficas que van bastante más allá de los sistemas analizados. Porque el estudio a fondo de un sistema tan complejo como es el de la *dehesa*, induce a pensar sobre las limitaciones que plantean los *a priori* que marcan las habituales fronteras del conocimiento, empezando por la separación entre ciencias de la naturaleza o de la Tierra y ciencias humanas o sociales, que esconden la escisión y el enfrentamiento, incluso, entre *hombre* y *naturaleza*, entre *economía* y *ecología* o entre calidad de vida y calidad ambiental. Por ejemplo, el hecho de que el sistema de la *dehesa*, no solo produzca mercancías sino también “servicios ambientales”, rompe con la tónica habitual de atribuir estos servicios a espacios, parques o ecosistemas llamados “naturales”, que se suponen ajenos o incompatibles con las actividades económicas productivas. Paradójicamente, cuando está de moda hablar de los servicios de los ecosistemas, este libro muestra que el sistema de la *dehesa*, no solo es un sistema económico que produce mercancías, sino también un ecosistema que genera “servicios ambientales”. Se constata incluso que, en este caso, la intervención humana favorece estos servicios: el paisaje de la *dehesa* es más apreciado (genera más *amenities*) y alberga más topodiversidad y biodiversidad, que el bosque cerrado que se formaría en ausencia de dicha intervención. Y se confirma que el componente vocacional y el amor al paisaje construido de la *dehesa*, orientan la valoración y el comportamiento de los propios gestores y propietarios de las fincas que hacen evolucionar al sistema, junto a los móviles pecuniarios habituales. Todo lo cual, no solo invita a revisar el tradicional divorcio entre *economía* y *ecología*, sino también entre esa *ecología* de la naturaleza que excluía a la especie humana y la *agroecología*, la *ecología industrial* o la *ecología urbana*, e incluso aquellos otros divorcios que se producen entre estética y funcionalidad o entre razón y emoción. En general, cabe concluir que es el ambicioso empeño investigador de unir el análisis pormenorizado de los elementos del sistema, con la comprensión de los procesos (históricos, ecológicos, económicos,...) en los que participan, el que acaba empujando a los autores a trascender las fronteras y los reduccionismos propios del conocimiento parcelario y esto resulta modélico, no solo para la *dehesa*, sino para el análisis económico en general.

En suma, que este libro ejemplifica el buen hacer de esa economía abierta y transdisciplinar que estudia cómo, no solo la *dehesa*, sino el proceso económico en general, tiene o puede tener efectos *degradantes*, pero también *mejorantes*, sobre el medio en el que se desenvuelve y que los recursos naturales, no son solo *limitantes*, sino también *sugerentes*, para conseguir que la especie humana organice de acuerdo con ellos su intendencia en una simbiosis enriquecedora, como han venido ilustrando durante siglos los logros de la agricultura tradicional,... o de la arquitectura vernácula.

Madrid, 12 de noviembre de 2012,





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Pablo Campos · Lynn Huntsinger
José L. Oviedo · Paul F. Starrs
Mario Díaz · Richard B. Standiford
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Mediterranean Oak Woodland Working Landscapes

Dehesas of Spain and Ranchlands
of California

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Foreword

How exciting and remarkable that this book, long in the making, is now done. Within these pages economy meets natural resources and ecology, in a union that honors both science and the practice of management. Compared within are two geographically set-apart agroforestry ecosystems that are nonetheless near neighbors in terms of climate, ecology, and cultural-historical linkages: Spain's extensive *dehesas* and the oak woodland ranches of California. This study of working woodlands in areas of Mediterranean-type climate sets aside proprietary approaches, laying out instead a body of knowledge and field-gathered data for use by professionals, managers, and policymakers. Those of us who have long sought to globalize studies of natural resource management, recognizing that economies and ecosystems are today wholly internationalized, see in this work author skills and interests that demolish all those conventional disciplinary limitations that typically restrain—and hamstring—scientific research.

The scope of this undertaking is commensurate with the complexity of the ecosystems and economies studied. Interdisciplinary collaboration demands breaking down a traditional aloofness among specialties and countries, and, with that, overcoming technical terminology. It is nearly without precedent for authors to have forged such commonalities in language, methodology, and focus. Overcoming a looming Tower of Babel of arcane specialized subfields, approaches, and language is difficult and irksome. Then, of course, when outlines were done, findings had to be rendered in the scientific vernacular of today, which is English. To do that, the entire working group necessarily grew comfortable with the Spanish of Castile and the English of California, accepting a vernacular with words like woodlands, *dehesa*, *monte*, and shrublands. At hand was a living lesson: an evolving process of mutual exchange and linguistic enrichment. Reliable data was drawn into support arguments and observations, and often was laboriously gleaned from places where information seemed initially unavailable.

It is therefore satisfying that the analyses in this volume ultimately derive from a huge collection of data, obtained for the most part directly by the researchers who wrote and illustrated each chapter. This offers a fertile synergy where the analysis in a chapter includes concrete data on motivation and behavior, income and production, historical process or ecosystem function—or all of the above. The discussion of the origins and evolution of land claims and the law of property

in Spain and California, for example, lays out practices that historically shaped *dehesas* and ranches, making this book a sizable step forward in comparative studies that will edify and clarify. It is neither possible nor desirable for me to go here into questions of detail, but I would add that, to my way of thinking, this book stands as a before-and-after benchmark; it compares the facts, fancies, and function of *dehesa* properties and woodland ranches, which is significant not just because of what is said in these pages, but also because a firm and unmistakable foundation is laid for any future investigation.

Coordinating a large team of researcher-authors is, at the best of times, arduous. Let me stress the importance of the experience and expertise that bound together this group of authors, and constructed the vision of the editors, who are united by an untallyable count of meetings, field visits, and exchanges where they knotted together friendships and cemented an ongoing collaboration. The book itself, with its extensive photographic material, reveals a fusion of intellect and shared affection that shows how human exchange encourages creativity, enthusiasm, and exuberance to the mutual improvement of researcher and results. I think it is also notable that this book has gone ahead with authors who gave freely of their time. Authors toiled on this because they believe in working landscapes and the people who work them, they enjoy learning about residents on the land, and ultimately in gaining understanding of the human role in ecosystem conservation. This compels me to note a paradox: How often does the richest learning and result come from studies that issue primarily from interest and affection?

The book poses philosophical reflections that go well beyond agroforestry ecosystems. In-depth study of complex systems such as *dehesas* and oak woodland ranches suggests the limitations posed by conventional sources of academic knowledge. That division starts with a specious separation between the natural or earth sciences and the social or human sciences. Barriers purportedly loom like redwoods or chestnut trees, separating humans from the natural world, dividing economy and environment, sundering quality of life considerations from environmental quality. Yet *dehesas* and ranches produce both sellable goods and “environmental services,” which put the lie to standard sequestering of such services into spaces, parks, or ecosystems that are described as “natural,” where they are supposedly incompatible with any form of extractive economic activity. Paradoxically, when these book authors write about ecosystem services, they show that an oak woodland agroforestry ecosystem not only makes sellable goods, it also produces an ecosystem that generates a rich range of “environmental services.” Humans relish these services.

With so many amenities to offer, the much-managed *dehesa* landscape is appreciated as much or more than a forest where humans as stewards and producers are absent. In fact, such a forest is quite unnatural, given thousands of years of human occupation and use in California and Spain. An enjoyment and love of time spent in the built landscape of *dehesas* and ranches guides managers, owners, and visitors to oak woodland properties, which makes them a product of human choice as much as pecuniary goals. Let us, as a result, consider as ancient prejudice any argument whatsoever that insists on separating economy and ecology. Nor

does nature's economy function without humans: agroecology, industrial ecology, and urban ecology are part of the same fundamental economy of our time on Earth. In general, I would argue that this ambitious work demonstrates that investigations uniting systematic study, including processes (economics, history, ecology, geography) pushes authors to transcend reductive borders. The result, here, is a model for understanding not just the dehesa and the oak woodland ranch, but for undertaking economic analysis in general.

In sum, this book exemplifies the salutary advantages of transdisciplinary research in the widening terrain of studies formed by an open economy. Not only are oak woodland ranches in California and the Spanish dehesa illuminated with a fine touch, so too are studies of working landscapes and economic processes. Sometimes what is laid bare are landscape deficiencies and economic problems; in other cases, what is suggested are improvements and benefits. Humankind may as a result be able to make saner, safer, sounder use of resources. We may learn from centuries of traditional agriculture, the institutions that build social capital, and the curious yet elegant vernacular architecture that results from this.



Madrid, November 20, 2012

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