

Jordi Nadal i Oller (1929-2020)*



On 8 December 2020, the historian Jordi Nadal i Oller died at the age of 90. He was elected to be a full member of the History-Archaeology Section of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans in 1978, and he became a supernumerary member in 1993. An expert in economic history, and especially in demographics and the history of industrialisation, he was the last direct disciple of Jaume Vicens Vives and continued his mentor's

task of updating historiography. He revised and improved the famous *Manual de Historia Económica de España* which Vicens had published.

A native of Cassà de la Selva, near the city of Girona, Jordi Nadal earned his PhD from the Universitat de Barcelona in 1957 with a thesis on the recovery of the Catalan population between 1553 and 1717. He was a lecturer at the University of Liverpool in 1958-1959. After serving as a professor of economic history at the Universitat de Barcelona until 1967, he moved to the Universitat de València in 1968-1969 and then to the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where he worked from 1970 to 1980, until returning once again to the Universitat de Barcelona from 1981 until he retired. He was the president of the Associació de Demografia Històrica from 1983 to 1991 and the Asociación Española de Historia Económica from 1994 to 1997. With Emili Giralt, he studied immigration from the kingdom of France to Catalonia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In addition to his innovative articles, his talks at Spanish and international conferences and the countless doctoral theses he supervised, his most famous books are *La*

población española, siglos XVI a XX (1966); *Los comienzos de la industrialización española* (1970); *El fracaso de la revolución industrial en España, 1814- 1913* (1975); *Història de la Caixa de Pensions* (1981); *Catalunya la fàbrica d'Espanya, 1833-1936* (1985), a book for an exhibition held at Barcelona's former Born market in conjunction with Jordi Maluquer de Motes; *La debilidad de la industria química española en el siglo XIX, un problema de demanda* (1986); *Sant Martí de Provençals, pulmó industrial de Barcelona: 1847- 1992* (1992); *Moler, tejer, fundir. Estudios de historia económica* (1992); *Immigració i redreç demogràfic: els francesos a la Catalunya dels segles XVI i XVII* (2000); *España en su cenit, 1516- 1598: un ensayo de interpretación* (2001); and *La Hispano-Suiza: esplendor y ruina de una empresa legendaria* (2019). Jordi Nadal also oversaw seminal collective works like *Història Econòmica de la Catalunya Contemporània* in six volumes (1988-1994), *Atlas de la industrialización en España: 1750- 2000* (2003) and *Atles de la industrialització a Catalunya, 1750-2010* (2012). In 1992, Jordi Nadal founded and directed the *Revista de Historia Industrial*.

He was active in and devoted to his passion for research and dissemination until his last days, as proven by his book on the famous Hispano-Suiza automobile factory. He was awarded the Narcís Monturiol medal (1983) and the Cross of Saint George (1997). He won the Pasqual Madoz national prize for social and economic research in 2004 and was bestowed an honorary doctoral degree from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in 2010 and the Universitat de Girona in 2013. It is impossible to write about demographic or industrial history in Spain or Catalonia without consulting the works of Jordi Nadal and his direct disciples, who have carried on his zeal to update the historiography in a broad range of fields where the human factor is prominent, conditioned yet not determined by economic factors.

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