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## THE PRODUCTION OF "CORRETTI" WINES IN VENICE

It is well known that as early as the 11th century Venice derived its economic wealth from the spice trade imported from the East. The chronicles recall how every year the lagoon merchants, following the legendary *Via delle Spezie* and the *Via del Cinnamono*, put on the Realtino market five thousand or more tons of spices, transported by fifty galleys and almost three thousand sailing ships, which were sold all over Europe. These were luxury products, with a high speculative value, which were used for dietetics and wellness (among the medicines the *teriacca* was one of the most famous), and they were also the reason for a symbolic status to be flaunted. Venice maintained a monopoly on spices until, doubled by Vasco de Gama the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese and Dutch began to import these goods from the 16th and 17th centuries, causing prices to drop in the City of the Doges (1). In particular, in dietetics were the Venetian apothecaries (*speziali*), for this reason called "da grosso", who in their grocery stores (*spicierie*) packed with jealously guarded recipes special blends, the famous "venetian bags" (*ready-to-use*, thus inventing the *packaging*), which were used for the most diverse purposes such as making "corretti" wines. There is still a vivid memory of the art of apothecaries in the toponymy of the lagoon city, and for the various shops and workshops one of the best known was the *Ruga degli spezieri* in Rialto. Precise information about the numerous varieties of spices sold on the Realtino market can be found in the rich inventory (*inventario*), written on 19 May 1629, in the deeds of the lagoon notary Giovanni Battista Profettini. The document was drawn up on time by the contractors on the occasion of the establishment of a company (*compagnia*) of "negoti di drogherie", based in the shop marked "della Pace" which was located near the Rialto Bridge.

(1) In particular on spices it refers to G. Rösch, *Mercatura e moneta*, in *Storia di Venezia* (Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani), edited by L. Cracco Ruggini- M. Pavan - G. Cracco - G. Ortalli, Rome 1992, I, pp. 549-573, and cited bibliography

The company, with a share capital of 20,000 ducats, had to last for three years. The financial statements, strictly double-entry, had to be reviewed monthly by the respective owners. These were the most varied spices such as "*zucheri fine, zucheri d'Alessandria, polvere bianca, siena, cassia, incensi, cardamono, goma rabica, curcuma, zibetto*", and many others (2)

It is also interesting to remember that, just as in the City of the Doges, also in the mainland the *spiziarie* (spices shops) were refurnished with a good assortment of spices, for example, the shop in the contrada Granda in Conegliano, a territory that has always been famous for its wine-growing vocation. In the '*Inventario*' (inventory) of 16th April 1709, in the deeds of the notary Ippolito Vezzati from Conegliano, were found rhubarb, absinthe, radicchio roots, 'san bucco' and acacia flowers, marjoram, lentisk, various apples, quince and pomegranate (3). These are seeds, barks, but also leaves, flowers and fruits that were dried, chopped together or used individually so that the product thus enriched could evoke new sensations for the most demanding consumer.

The Venetians made it possible to maintain luxury after the fall of the Roman Empire. It is in fact from the Romans that they inherited the ancient tradition of making *Vinia ficticia*, the much appreciated "corretti" or "manipolati" wines. Plinio il Vecchio speaks extensively about these particular wines in his *Naturalis historia*, and among the 185 varieties of wines that the Patavino author presents to the reader, he remembers how twenty-nine of them were produced using herbs, vegetables and cereals; twenty-one were made with berries, flowers and various fruits, while fourteen were made with spices such as exotic aromatic plants (4)

The agronomist Agostino Gallo talks about the production of "manipolati" wines in the manual *Le venti giornate dell'agricoltura et de' piaceri della villa* (Venice 1569), advising the oenologist to immerse the aroma in barrels filled with poured wine, i.e. filtered (with Hippocrates' "manica"), and therefore without impurities. The "corretti" wines were sold in Venice in the Malvasia, and in the eighteenth century they were part of the fashionable wines appreciated in the *Bottega del caffè*, of goldonian memory, with other special wines found in today's *Vermouth* and in the pleasure of drinking a "corretto" coffee with grappa or wine (5)

(2) The company was established by Antonio and his brothers Seghezzi qm Mario and Mrs. Dorotea Corso, wife of qm Cesare Amadio and his son Giovanni Antonio Amadio, well-known spice traders in Venice (State Archives of Venice, Notary, Acts, b. 10993, cc. 148v-157v).

(3) The inventory of the workshop owned by the qm Antonio Marzari was drawn up at the request of the heirs (State Archives of Treviso, Notary, I series, b. 3086, prot. 1709, cc. n.i. on the date, 16 April 1709).

(4) In this regard Iris Fontanari Martinatti, *La vite e il vino nella farmacia di Plino il Vecchio*, ed. Arca 2001, *passim*.

(5) A. Peressini, *Per la storia del Prosecco: l'inventario (1712) dei vini del "magazzino da malvasia" in calle del Remedio in Venice, in Economia e Commerci nelle Prealpi Venete (sec. XIII - sec. XX), Circolo Vittorinese di Ricerche Storiche (Atti del Convegno, Vittorio Veneto, 15 April 2018), Vittorio Veneto 2018, II, pp. 87-98, and cited bibliography.*

Andrea Peressini

## HIPPOCRATIC WINES IN VENICE BETWEEN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

The institution (1556) by the Serenissima Republic of the magistracy of the *Provveditori sopra i beni inculti*, with the purpose of coordinating the reclamation of marshy lands and the irrigation of the arid ones, can be considered as the beginning of the agricultural revolution. This would lead to the transformation of the Venetian countryside in the 16th century with the creation of modern farms with business centres that were the basis of the "civilization of the Venetian villas". This articulated territorial development plan, which has been made possible thanks to the creation of appropriate channels for the collection and disposal of excess rainwater, constitutes the plot of the current agricultural system in the Veneto region.

In *fattorie* (farms) of Veneto of the 16th and 17th centuries, the way of farming also changed with the introduction of new crops such as corn and rice, and in particular with the spread of viticulture and new vines bred to form *la piantata* (planted area), along the ditches of the fields, close to the headlands and in the "broli" (small orchards), the latter being places reserved for agricultural experimentation and for the enjoyment of the owner.

The new crop varieties were supplied to settlers by the owners, usually after being tested in the lagoon gardens before being cultivated extensively in the countryside on the mainland and in the lagoon islands. This way of managing the land is documented by the land lease contracts, recorded in the deeds of the Venetian notaries and in the tax returns submitted to the Fisco (*Redecime*)<sup>1</sup>.

In the rentals to be paid in foodstuffs, wine and wheat were the main products to be given to the landowner; for this reason the grape harvest and the harvesting of the wheat were carried out under the control of the owners' agents. These agents also supervised the threshing of the wheat on the farmyard, the various oenological phases carried out in the company's cellars (*caneve*) as well as the distillation of the pomace which, on many occasions, the owner reserved for himself to make grappa (*acquavita*).

The wine - distinguished simply in "bianco" (white) and "negro"(red) and sometimes according to the type of vine cultivated - thus produced in a workmanlike manner, pure and without water, was put into barrels and transported to Venice on boats equipped for this purpose. The grape was often requested even as a gift to be paid to the master as a table grape, *agresta* (obtained from grapes harvested while still unripe which replaced the lemon that at the time was more expensive) and raisins. For example, Sebastiano Michel q. Giulio for the rent (1584) of the twenty-six fields (about 18 hectares) that he had at Zero under Mestre, which was at the time Treviso territory, wanted the settler to give him sixteen *mastelli* of wine every year (one tub corresponds to about 78 litres) and among the gifts he had to give also "duoi cesti di uva Marzemina" (2)

(1) In general about land reclamation and villas we refer to G. Gullino, *Quando il mercante costruì la villa: le proprietà dei Veneziani nella Terraferma*, in *Storia di Venezia (Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani)*, edited by G. Cozzi - P. Prodi, Roma 1994, VI, pp. 875-924, and cited bibliography.

In turn, the *nobilhomo* (aristocrat) Giovanni Pesaro q. Leonardo asked - for himself and on behalf of his brother Antonio, *abbot and canon of Treviso and commendator of the prepository of S. Bortolamio* - that for the rent (1597) of the " *carro, canal, hostaria et traghettar le barche a Lizzafusina*" with attached land located in Dolo, a Paduan territory, there were eight *quarte* (one *quarta* is about 21 litres) of "malvasia moscatella dolce" (3) grapes. Instead *Perin* Chechin q. Vettor, known as "Brusò", for the rent (1607) of the thirty-three fields he had in Rossignago, podesteria of Mestre, he requested that every year thirty *mastelli* (tubs) of wine were given to him and among the gifts there was also " *metà de tutta l'uva marzemina*" (half of all the marzemina grape) produced on the farm (4). The Venetian monastery of Santa Maria dell'Orto for the rent (1619) of the seventy fields he had in Carpenedo specified in the contract that " *tutto il marzemino*" (all the marzemina grape) belonged to the monastery (5). In the same year the monastery also rented another estate of eighty fields, always located in Carpenedo in Mestre, for which it asked for eighty-six *mastelli* (tubs) of "vino collato", specifying that thirty had to be white wine while the others fifty-six black, and that " *nel qual nero debba esser tutta l'uva marzermina*"(6).

To make the "vino collato", they used bundle bags made of rough wool cloth, with a wooden circle on the top to keep it open. The bags were filled with wine must which was filtered (*collato*), retaining the wool impurities, and by gravity, descending into a pipe, it was conveyed into the barrel where, in order to make Hippocratic wines (Hippocrates is attributed the invention of aromatic wines), essences - such as absinthe, cinnamon, rhubarb and ginger - were put according to the advice given by *Apicius in De re coquinaria*.

These were fine wines that were bought by wine and malvasia merchants, who often followed *de visu* (personally) both the harvest in the field and the vinification in the winery, in order to sell them in Venice in different blends depending on the type of wine - such as the *magazen*, which can recall the current wine shop - or to export them. An exclusive aspect is that *Prosecco* was sold (1712) in the "magazzino da malvasia" of Bortolo Nicolini in calle del Remedio in Venice in the district of Santa Maria Formosa and that *Malvasia* "con l'absincio", today known as *Vermouth*, was sold (1780) in the workshop of Nicolò Donadelli in the district of San Cassan, always in the city of the Doges.(7)

(2) *State Archives of Venice, Notary, Acts, b. 7854, cc. 524r-526r, 11 July 1584, notary Girolamo Luran.*

(3) *State Archives of Venice, Notary, Acts, b. 3141, cc. 185r-187v, 24 March 1597, notary Antonio Callegarini.*

(4) *State Archives of Venice, Notary, Acts, b. 2746, cc. 163v-165r, 14 September 1607, notary Ludovico De Cappel.*

(5) *State Archives of Venice, Notary, Acts, b. 75, c. 320rv, 20 May 1619, notary Domenico Adami.*

(6) *State Archives of Venice, Notary, Acts, b. 75, cc. 182v-183r, 2 June 1619, notary Domenico Adami.*

(7) *A. Peressini, Per la storia del Prosecco: l'inventario (1712) dei vini del "magazzino da malvasia" in calle del Remedio in Venice, in Economia e Commerci nelle Prealpi Venete (sec. XIII - sec. XX), Circolo Vittorioso di Ricerche Storiche (Atti del Convegno, Vittorio Veneto, 15 April 2018), Vittorio Veneto 2018, II, pp. 87-98, and cited bibliography.*