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## CONFERENCE REPORTS

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### *Wine Production and Trade in the History of Europe*

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The international conference on « Wine Production and Trade in the History of Europe », mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries, organized by the University and Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Arts and Crafts and Agriculture of Pavia in Italy came just at the right moment. For some decades historians, geographers, economists and oenologists have in fact been working on the history of vines and wine, but they have done so somewhat sporadically, in national or regional contexts or concentrating often more on trade than on production. The recent works by R. Dion and Y. Renouard of the Bordeaux School in France, by Miss K. James in Britain and by J. Craeyback in the Netherlands are examples of these tendencies; however they do pave the way for fruitful syntheses. On the contrary Germany, in spite of excellent geographical researches, Spain, in spite of the noteworthy monography by A. Huetz de Lemps, and Italy, in spite of the work of A. Marschalchi and G. Dalmasso, are still outsiders in a field in which they should have much to say. Lastly, if the medievalists, generally speaking, have roughly freed the period they are concerned with from the problems of wine and its trade, the same cannot be said of historians dealing with periods nearer to us.

Bearing in mind these considerations, C. M. Cipolla, Professor at Pavia University and Director of its Institute of Economic History, and Federigo Melis, Professor at Florence University and Director of its Institute of Economic History, suggested the above theme to the persons taking part in this Conference, insisting of course on the Italian aspects of the research.

The choice of Pavia as centre for this work was excellent as this town's

Chamber of Commerce pays particular attention to the efforts made by viticulturists in the surrounding country. The old capital of Italy in the high Middle Ages, with its spacious and imposing university buildings, its majestic colleges and the warm welcome given by the administrative, municipal and economic authorities, provided the members of the congress with an appropriate milieu and an excellent organization. It must be added that, wine being the subject of the conference, the receptions and meals and the excursion to Santa Maria della Versa and to the vineyards beyond the Po were illustrated by « practical surveys » of the pleasantest nature. For all this we have to thank Dr. A. Ricevuti, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and his assistants who, together with the University organizers, divided the days most successfully between gastronomy and science.

The works were held from Friday 17th to Monday 20th September in the meeting room of the Chamber of Commerce, the programme consisting of the following reports:

J. RICHARD (Dijon University), *Production et commerce du vin de Bourgogne aux XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles*; CH. HIGOUNET (Bordeaux University), *Production et commerce du vin de Bordeaux aux XVIII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles*; K. H. SCHRODER (Tubingen University), *La distribution géographique de la vigne dans l'Allemagne du Sud-Ouest au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et ses développements successifs jusqu'au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*; W. SCHLEGEL (Tubingen University), *Production viticole en Suisse depuis 1500*; F. MELIS (Florence University), *Storia della produzione e del commercio del vino in Italia*, with particular regard to Tuscany; G. BARBIERI (Verona University), *Produzione e commercio del vino nel Veneto nell'età moderna*; M. ROMANI (Catholic University of Milan), *Produzione e commercio dei vini di Lombardia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*; G. BRACCO (Turin University), *Produzione e commercio dei vini piemontesi nei secoli XVIII e XIX*; G. FRITZ, *Produzione e commercio dei vini del Lazio nei secoli XVIII e XIX*; L. DE ROSA (Faculty of Maritime Economics, Naples), *Produzione e commercio dei vini del Meridione nei secoli XVIII e XIX*; S. ZANINELLI (Trento University), *La crisi della fillossera in Francia e in Italia alla fine del secolo XIX*.

There was also a report on *The Trade and Imports of Wine in England in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, sent in by R. Davis of Leicester University, and several interesting addresses were listened to: by M.lle Pious (Geneva University) on wine consumption in Geneva in the 16th century; by J. Richard (Dijon University) on medieval viticulture in Cyprus; by I. Imberciadori (Parma University) on viticulture in Tuscany and by M. Abrate (Turin University) on phylloxera in Piedmont.

As can be seen, this conference provided the monograph still needed, especially in Italy, at the present stage of research. But during the animated discussions — admirably directed by C. M. Cipolla, an accurate and untiring translator — a certain number of themes emerged that will have to be examined more thoroughly in a general comparative frame.

First of all the necessity became recognizable of providing as accurate a cartography as possible of the vineyards of Europe at the various stages of their historical development. Attention, however, was attracted not only by geographical distribution, but also by the evolution of the agrarian landscape. When did vines begin to be grown on terraces cut out of the mountain sides? In what period, here and there, did viticulturists pass from high to low vines? What place was occupied by vines grown in between or in combination with other crops and till when? Of course the several forms of cultivation have always been mentioned in relation to the historical geography of European vines.

As far as the making and preservation of wine is concerned, the general problem of the formation of the concept of vineyard (*cru*) and ageing will require many other researches after what has already been done in this respect for the wines of Bordeaux. The hope was also expressed that it will be possible to find out more about the history of bottles and corks, closely linked with the problem of preservation.

Output, yields and prices made the need felt for a close critical study of the relevant statistical series, above all in the contemporary period. But when trade is being discussed, it is always difficult to ascertain the share absorbed locally and the share reserved for export. Regarding market fluctuations, moreover, the part played by consumers' tastes in the different social classes must not be neglected.

Finally, for the 19th century, stress was laid on the importance of the development of oenology and its teaching, the role of agricultural associations and chambers of commerce, government intervention in viticulture and the wine trade, the influence of French methods abroad — all subjects that still need to be gone into more thoroughly. The study of diseases and the post-phylloxera reconstitution of European vineyards will also have to be completed.

If the time for monographs has not come to an end and other meetings of this kind are deemed useful to complete our local and regional documentation, it is incontestable that a future conference, held to answer or seek to answer the important questions indicated above, will be able considerably to improve our knowledge of the civilization of vines and wine. As a result of the Pavia conference, moreover, Federigo Melis has announced the formation of an International Centre for the history of wine which, with the assistance of the university research institutes and the commercial institutions, will promote further meetings. Another propitious and generous initiative taken by three economic historians (Cipolla, De Rosa, Melis) who are always on the alert; an initiative that will prolong most fruitfully the unforgettable days spent in Pavia.