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The cover features the work entitled "Aurora Pinto Bandeira", by the Brazilian plastic artist Assis Costa with the wine produced in the area. The first houses in Pinto Bandeira, in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, were built by Italian emigrants in 1876 and the church of Our Lady of Pompeii was built in 1922. Courtesy of the author.

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MIGRANTS

The Italian grapes that conquered the world

 **Bruno Mondadori**

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In my role as Director of one of the three organizations participating in this project, I have the great pleasure of introducing this excellent book, which collates the results of research bearing the title: “In the footsteps of migrants – the Italian grapes that conquered the world”.

It is a body of research strongly supported by the Department of Documentary, Linguistic-Philological and Geographic Sciences, which I represent. Not only does the project deserve a commendation, it also involves many aspects of the scientific activities pertaining to our very academic structure. In the project, in fact, and in the articles contained in the book – an important period of contemporary history stands out, the age of the Italian migration straddling the 19th and 20th centuries, studied by some professors of our Department with remarkable results. A fundamental contribution has also been made by “Fondazione Migrantes”.

There is a very important aspect of the research pertaining to geography too, especially an across-the-board geography which nowadays increasingly highlights the aspects of the production of foodstuffs and their impact on the socio-cultural structure of our countries. In this regard, I am honoured to mention the participation “Società Geografica Italiana Onlus”, an organization which is a substantial point of reference for every researcher in this field. I shall not neglect to mention the relevance that the framework of the project in Expo 2015 is going to provide, as such research is perfectly coherent with the goals of this extraordinary event.

As a scholar in Linguistics, however, I am pleased to underline that wine terminology is of great linguistic-cultural importance, the subject of various studies research projects and to which this work is the perfect companion – although not explicitly – and there will certainly be the time and place to develop this minor, although not completely irrelevant, aspect.

Special thanks are due to the editors, first of all the project coordinator, our colleague Flavia Cristaldi, who has also taken care of the collaboration with “Società Geografica Italiana Onlus”. We are also very grateful to Dr. Delfina Licata and her fruitful interaction with the “Fondazione Migrantes”. I shall not make individual mention the authors of the contributions, which make the book so meaningful, worth reading just for its wealth of iconography – any choice among so many relevant articles would be unfair on my part. Heartfelt thanks to everybody who chose to take part in truly interdisciplinary research, delivering its first concrete result – this important book. *Ad altiora*, as ever!



FROM THE RIF TO CAP BON: CULTIVATING VINEYARDS IN THE MAGHREB

Sandra Leonardi

Grape cultivation was already well established in the Maghreb since the time of Roman colonization. However, it was banned under Islamic rule and wine production was prohibited until the advent of the French colonists. In Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia people started to cultivate vines again, in part thanks to the hard work and contribution of Italians.

The Mediterranean Sea is a geographical element which links twenty-one countries. Taken individually, each of them is different in cultural, economic and geopolitical terms. However, all share a specific natural unity: mountain ranges rolling down to the coastline, and plains that are limited in size.

Italy and North Africa share a lot more, besides geography and belonging

to those civilizations which animated the Mediterranean basin: they have a common history, created through crossings from one shore to the other. Indeed, there was a time when it was the Italians who used to sail across the Mediterranean: whole families emigrated to the warmer lands of the Maghreb in search of a better life. Many of them were farmers, and their tenacity and knowhow made it possible to start *“planting orchards, citrus groves and vineyards where there was desert”* (Cresti, 2008, p. 189).

Those men were trying to find their social redemption through agriculture, and this gave rise to an exchange mechanism between environmental and human factors which modified, and in some respects, altered an

existing ecosystem in order to make it suitable for their needs and traditions. Among the arborescent crops which were cultivated by the Italian community, vine cultivation was well-developed in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The stories which bind these three countries to the Italian population and their traditions are different. Each has a particular aspect, although the Italian talent for combining strength and knowhow in working the land was common to all.

The winemaking industry and the Italian experience in Morocco and Algeria

Italians arrived in Morocco starting in 1825; Genoese and Sardinians in particular moved to this country thanks to an agreement between the Sultanate of Morocco and the Kingdom of Sardinia. Initially, according to colonial reports and records, Italians were not numerous, but over time they started to increase, growing from about 70 registered people in 1904, to approximately 12,000 in 1914. Many of them came from Tunisia: they were farmers with valid sharecropping contracts already in force before moving to Morocco. In these territories, between the Rif and the Atlas, where the weather was especially suited to citrus and olive tree cultivation, Europeans in general, and particularly Italians, together with the French, focused on viticulture. Therefore, after the Romans introduced the *Vitis vinifera*, and following the centuries-old Islamic ban imposed against drinking alcohol, French colonization made it possible to resume agricultural activity aimed at producing table grapes and wine. In the 1929 French Colonial Atlas, the areas of Morocco described as dedicated to vine cultivation were the coastal plains between Meknes-Fes, Rabat-Casablanca, Oujda-Berkane and Marrakech. Morocco nationalized

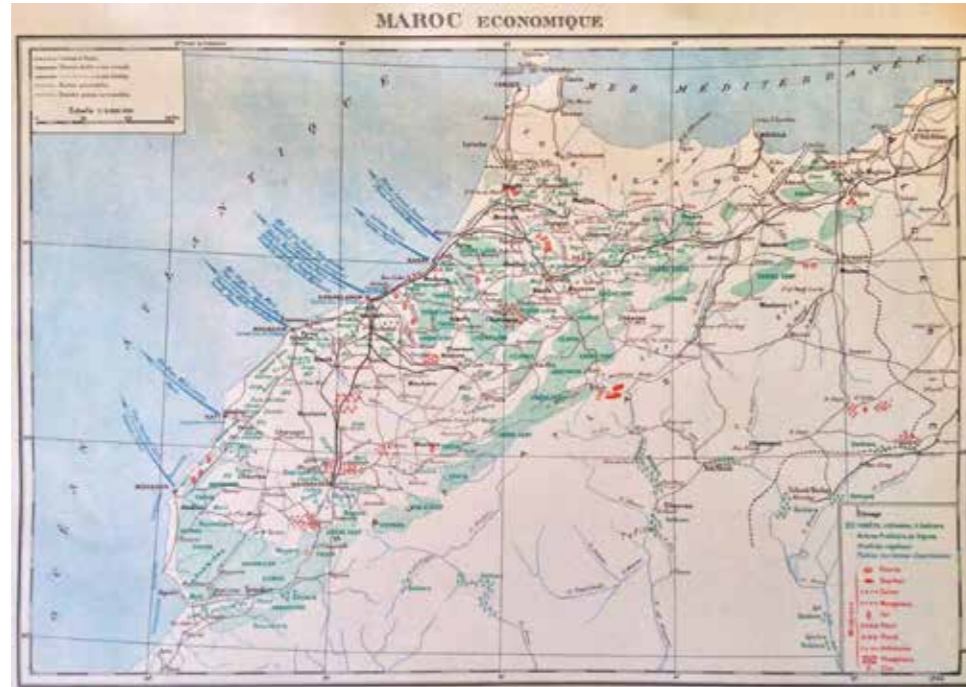
its wine industry in 1973, following the declaration of independence.

The Algerian wine regions are located in the Oran department (Coteaux de Nascara, Coteaux de Tlemcen, Monts du Tessalah, Mostaganem, Mostaganem-Keneda, Oued-Imbert) and in the Algiers department (Ain – Bessen – Bouira, Cateaux du Zuccar, Haut-Dahra, Medea). Vines were introduced to Algeria by the French due to the spread of phylloxera in their home country. Hundreds of Neapolitan winegrowers were then charged with cultivating them. *“They settled, forming small estates created on land given by the French, who could not grow anything on it, and started to plant vineyards which, thanks to hard work, help from their women and children, and loving attention, produced excellent results”* (Briani, 1931 p. 80). These vineyards were destroyed by phylloxera as well. However, the Neapolitan winemakers from Philipeville replaced them with American vine, thus achieving adequate economic returns for their hard work.

The history of vine cultivation in Algeria is deeply bound to the Italian wine tradition in different ways and introduces a new aspect, namely the uniquely Italian ability to create the facilities required for wine processing, such as wine cooperatives and wine barrels and vats. If it is true that a temperate climate and fertile land are required to produce a good wine, the circumstances for winemaking in Algeria were not the best. Indeed, in particularly hot countries timing is fundamental and winemaking is no simple feat. Long processing must be avoided, as it may jeopardize the right degree of fermentation; furthermore, marc exposed to the air can generate acetic bacteria. In Algeria, what can be found in colonial literature is close to the truth: “nature makes the grapes

1.
Wine production areas
in Morocco.

Source:
French Colonial Atlas, 1929.



2.
Wine production areas
in Tunisia.

Source:
French Colonial Atlas, 1929.



and the man makes the wine". In order to solve all these problems, an entire new system of processing and machinery was created, to some extent masterminded by the Italians. Among the companies specialized in building winemaking facilities there were three Italian firms working in Algeria: Borsari, Colomar and Pedotti. Borsari and Co., which established its headquarters in Oran and Algiers, was responsible for manufacturing reinforced concrete wine tanks with a total capacity of 1.3 million hectolitres, thereby serving about four hundred wine producers across the country. The founder of Pedotti, Bartolomeo, began working in Algeria back in 1902, initially as a clerk and later on as the foreman of a company called Meley. Characterized by a keen intellect, in 1918 he set up his own company, creating "out of nowhere a very important and respected enterprise" (Ferrara, 1931, p. 20), which merged with Colemar a year later. In 1920, he eventually founded the firm called Pedotti B., which in the late 1920s and early 1930s carried out works in reinforced concrete for more than one hundred and fifty private wineries and fermentation rooms, twelve cooperatives and two distilleries; it built several wine cooperatives and wine

tanks, adapting the project each time to the individual client's needs. The company was able to build structures capable of holding more than one million hectolitres of wine and more than twenty-three thousand hectolitres of water. These works also benefited from Italian manpower, which vaunted some of the best cementers of the time. Grape processing requires not only adequate facilities but also suitable and efficient tools, such as presses and stalk-removers for the vinification of red wines, and simple wine-presses for the vinification of white and rosé wines. In this sector too, Italy provided the necessary machinery, produced by Garolla Limene (Padua), well known throughout North Africa as a supplier to almost all the farms owned by Italians and others too. The spread of Garolla-brand presses and stalk-removers was so extensive that the term "garollare" was created to describe the act of pressing grapes, which was no longer carried out by treading, but done mechanically.

Wine producers and industries with an Italian flavour in Tunisia

The relationship between vineyards, Italian emigration and Tunisia offers insight into another, different story.

3.

Fermentation room with twenty automatic leaching vats at Dallee C. winery in Mascara, Algeria, capacity 12,000 hl, made by Pedotti B.



Fermentation room with twenty-two uncovered reinforced concrete vats, made by the Bordarsi company for the Delorme G. cooperative in Parmentier, Algeria.

Fermentation room with eight elevated reinforced concrete vats on a wall, built by Borsari for the Gonzales J. cooperative in Parmentier, Algeria.



Interior of the cellar at the Lopez J. cooperative in Saint Joseph, built by Pedotti, Algeria.

Source: Ferrara, 1931, p. 26.

Italians arrived in Tunisia at the end of the nineteenth century and, even in a foreign land, they kept up their farming traditions and continued cultivating vineyards, although social and political conditions were not the best and did not ensure full freedom of action, even in the agriculture sector.

Of the nearly two hundred thousand Italians who had emigrated to these lands, the Sicilian community was among the largest.

Considering that just 140 km separate the coast of Tunisia from Sicily, the first arrived in rowing boats. They left from Pantelleria as well, just 70 km away, invited by an Italian consular agent who gave them the right to cultivate vines in exchange for half of the property. The first colonies were built in Reyville, now called Salloun, and Kelibia, and later in Grombalia, on the edge of the Cap Bon peninsula, as a result of a sudden drought that prevented any cultivation in the coastal areas. Thirty families settled in this area which, even today, is one of the most productive wine regions in North Africa.

But Sicilians began to settle elsewhere (Bizerta, Sousse, Sfax), spreading so pervasively that neighbourhoods called Petite Sicile appeared in Tunis and La Goulette.

In these areas too, vine cultivation gained a new lease of life with the arrival of the French after 1881, following the long ban enforced by the Arabs.

In 1885 the rural work of the Italians was facilitated by the law on private colonization, which, however, by

itself was not enough to achieve that transformation that everyone was waiting for. To economically boost the agricultural sector it was, instead, fundamental to employ the determination and the strength of the Italians, who thanks to their technique and tenacity managed in the end to create agricultural centres: *"The official measures and the favourable environment would have achieved little or nothing without the qualities and abilities of tens of thousands of our compatriots who as usual, came mainly from nearby Sicily. With their hard work, balanced parsimony, and adaptation to the weather, the Italians managed to change from being farm labourers to being skilled independent smallholders, while at the same time transforming the landscape of Tunisia"* (Brioni, 1931, p. 86).

Gradually large farms were set up and scattered almost everywhere, around Grombalia, Bizerte, Mateur, Tebourba and Thibar, each specializing in a particular product.

The Sicilian families who settled on the Cape Bon peninsula produced a Muscat quite similar to the one originally produced in Pantelleria. As a matter of fact, some of the immigrants from Pantelleria imported and developed this particular grape variety in this part of Tunisia, and the way it was introduced proves the Italian tenacity and creativity in reaching their goals, especially considering that the region was under French rule at the time. The government had forbidden

all the colonizers to introduce, and therefore cultivate vines from abroad, but the migrants from Pantelleria overcame this obstacle by building a cage for transporting chickens, made with muscatel vines. It was given to an elderly woman who spoke only the dialect of Pantelleria; once she reached the Tunisian coast on a rowing boat, the customs officers let her go, given her poor condition and the language barrier which made communication impossible. This is how the grafts of Muscat, the famous Pantelleria Gold, also known as Zibibbo or Muscat of Alexandria, arrived in Tunisia.

Considering its high quality and extensive cultivation, when the French realized it was widely grown they did not take measures to destroy the vines, allowing them, instead, to replace the most widespread vine in the area, the Frontignan, in the space of ten years.

In addition to Muscat, Cataratto, Inzolina, Perticone, Mantonaco, all typically Sicilian grapes, and the Sardinian variety Carignano, were planted too.

Italian wine producers in Tunisia had a very long and troubled history, which began with the arrival of people from Livorno. They initially invested in Tunisian land, but later decided to sell everything to the Arabs, who at the beginning, under the French governorship, started to cultivate it before selling it on, often to Sicilians.

These estates were sold in lots of thirty hectares each. As they could not afford to buy them individually, the Italians set up family cooperatives, which were eventually able to acquire the same lots they had cultivated with great sacrifice as sharecroppers.

Initially, the plots purchased were located along the coast, where the Sicilians had first landed and built their shelters made of reeds. Over the time, however, once the property was acquired, they transformed the

landscape, building several villages featuring the traditional houses of Pantelleria, the dammusi.

Drought forced these communities to move and settle in the area of Grombalia, located on the Cape Bon peninsula as before. They started to work again as sharecroppers for Arab companies and, after a few years, were able to buy these new plots of land and establish new companies. *"Italian winemakers thus ended up playing an important role in Tunisian agricultural development, not only as skilled labour, but as landowners too. The number of Italian vineyards increased rapidly in the last decade of the nineteenth century, rising from 159 in 1891-1892 to 1,067 in 1901-1902, on a total area of 458 and 4,203 hectares respectively"* (Melfa, 2008, p. 204).

Properties were divided into three categories: large or very large with more than fifty hectares, medium, between ten and fifty acres, and small and very small with less than ten hectares. Throughout Tunisia there were very few properties exceeding fifty hectares, between thirty and forty units. They were equipped to process every step of wine production, up to the vinification stage and, for this reason, they had cellars and industrial machinery. The owners of medium-sized allotments could meet their family's needs with the proceeds of their grape harvests, while smallholders cultivated vines for personal use only and had to do additional jobs in order to support the family, for example by working on somebody else's land. As a matter of fact, the 11,000 farm workers in 1900 included many Italians who, given their skills and knowledge, were hired as labourers, navvies, or seasonal workers for pruning and harvesting. Above all, Sicilians occupied a place in this niche and became 'regular vine-dressers', making a significant contribution to



4. Wine cellar of the company Brignone in Grombalia.

Source: Brignone family Archive.

transforming the landscape and helping vines become one of the main crops in areas like Khanguet and Mornag (Loth, in Melfa (2008) p. 82). The variation of the Tunisian agricultural landscape became even more evident, with the amount of land devoted to vineyards increasingly steadily, reaching 50,500 hectares in 1933. Vines were planted using the sapling technique and were not implanted with their roots, but as cuttings. The cultivation methods used in Sicily were reproduced in Tunisia, such as the practice of planting in 1.50 m wide rows, or the technique of tying the vines in order to resist strong winds (in dialect "impupazzare"). Besides, given that the plots purchased by the Italians were the cheapest and, in most cases, did not enjoy favourable and comfortable positions and exposure, terracing techniques combined with stone walls were used in the steepest allotments, thus reproducing the typical rural landscape of southern Italy. However, the Sicilian producers were not always as careful and precise as French methods required. For example, they did not separate vineyards with different grape varieties, and they stored all sorts of goods and products together in the cellars, including vinegar. All habits that led the French to impose stricter rules, whose transgression could imply the closure of the company. Life in a foreign land was not easy and things were made even more complicated by the meticulousness of the French, who also set the terms of sale and bought the majority of the crop or wine, exporting it to France. The negotiation took place months before the grape harvest in late August and early September, always subject to French authorization, and was finalized once fermentation had ended. Italians adapted to the conditions they found in Tunisia, although they never stopped looking for solutions

that would enable them to work in the best possible way, even creating consortia for the protection of their rights, especially after the severe damage caused by phylloxera in 1938. During that particular period, Italy itself intervened through the Chamber of Commerce, to set up a nursery for the collective distribution of American vines. The importance of vine cultivation is also confirmed by the publication of a weekly Italian language trade magazine, eloquently titled *Il Viticoltore Tunisino* ("The Tunisian winemaker"). Its articles provided advice and expertise useful to the Italian community in Tunisia, improving their knowledge of wine processing. One of the main problems concerned recognizing the correct fermentation. In issue 24 of *Il Viticoltore Tunisino* of July 7, 1907, it was recommended to regulate the temperature of the must, "*mixing the grapes harvested during the day with those gathered early in the morning, or by fermenting in small containers, as wine gets warmer in large tanks. Or by cooling the environment with a combination of air currents, or even cooling the vat both outside, covering it with cloths soaked in iced water, and inside, with a coil through which cold water can circulate*" (*Il Viticoltore Tunisino*, 1907 p. 3). Wine has moved people from everywhere and continues to do so. It overwhelms people with its passion and this is the feeling that comes to the fore when hearing the stories of Italian migrants whose ancestors devoted themselves to cultivating vines in North Africa. The pain can be felt even more when recalling the day they were forced to leave everything they had achieved so far, without any notice. The Italians had come to Tunisia in search of a better life, as poverty drove them to leave their homeland, but little by little, with hard work and sacrifice, they made their own way and built

5. Italian family vineyard of Andrea Pandolfo who, setting off from Pantelleria in 1880 brought small grafts of Zibibbo grapes to Tunisia. Thanks to the commitment of Pandolfo and his son Giovanni, ships full of Pandolfo wines sailed to serve the best markets in France. The pictures show other scenes of life in Tunisia, including the grape harvest at the Pandolfo winery in Khanguet Gare.

Source:
Gabriele Pandolfo Archive.





up such a good reputation that no vineyard would have existed without Italians to coordinate activities. Then, suddenly, everything changed.

Despite subsequent political measures which tended to change the state of affairs, the most determined Italians resisted the disorders of 1952, when the nationalist movement, which developed in the 1930s, started to rise up. The nationalists became stronger on July 31 1954 when the French authorities promised to grant autonomy to the country, until July 1957, when Tunisia gained independence from France. Although it was a very difficult period, with strikes and various forms of guerrilla activity, the Italians survived, continuing to cultivate their vineyards. However, the situation did not improve. On May 12 1964, the radio announced that Habib Bourguiba, President of Tunisia, had decided to expropriate all the assets and properties owned by foreigners in Tunisia and to nationalize companies, including agricultural ones. It was pointless running to their businesses in an attempt to save what they could, as the gates were closed and controlled by the local authorities, who prevented access. So many years of hard work under the Tunisian sun vanished in one day. While the troubles of 1957 had been

overcome and put behind them, just then it was impossible to fight against the strength of the local authorities, and the only feasible solution was to return to Italy. Upon arriving home, several of the Italians returning from Tunisia described to “La Domenica del Corriere”, how they felt when they had to abandon that land so abruptly, leaving behind the vineyards along with their belongings: “*They took everything, the house, the vineyard*”, said Concetta Bosco. “*It’s hard to give up, it’s hard, when I was born in that house and my children as well, when my father and my grandfather before him had worked on those vineyards*”, is the testimony of Rosario Mancuso (Blandi, 2012, p. 47).

Wine production in Tunisia has continued and today some Tunisian wineries run their businesses in the old Italian buildings, which still maintain their original features. Nowadays there is just one Sicilian company which is authorized to manage a Tunisian domain in Khanguet, near Grombalia and where, on the 200 acre estate, Carignano is cultivated among other varieties.

The Italians of Tunisia have started a new life elsewhere, but they are still deeply bound to that land, as they left behind on Tunisian soil a life built through hard work and sacrifice.

THE DESERT MIRACLE: TALES OF MEN AND VINES IN LIBYA

Nadia Fusco, Sandra Leonardi

The history of Italian agricultural colonization in Libya is a story that begins with political events, which cannot be ignored if we are to understand the mechanisms put in place to achieve the objectives that Italy set itself on the “Fourth Shore”. The population plans, the wars, the local guerrillas are just the beginning of the history of whole farming families who moved to Libya to work the land, the land that was defined fertile and cultivable at the beginning of the Italian adventure (Natili, 2014).

The Italian presence in Libya, from political action to land transformation

“*There in Mediterranean Africa, Rome’s name lives in the tradition, lives in the monuments. Tripolitania was already*

part of the Roman Empire in Africa, and the wells that mark those lands that were flourishing gardens, the path of the first civilization, are all Roman, and the ruins of the villas, theatres and temples of the world’s rulers, show our fathers’ richness, the splendour of the vegetation and the richness of Tripolitania’ [...] we try to make these populations rich, to our advantage”.

These words, published in “Il Messaggero” on April 18th 1907, are one example of a multitude of voices which, in those years, spoke out in Italy in favour of the colonization of Libyan land, then under Ottoman rule (Vilayet of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica). The few opponents, although eminent people (Gaetano Salvemini, Arcangelo Ghisleri, Luigi Einaudi), were not

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