

Editorial

From time immemorial wine is recognized as a tool of mediation both among men and between them and the deity. This happens in the classic antiquity where the state of inebriation is considered as a manifestation of the sympathy with god, and in the Christian tradition where wine is either a symbol or the very substance of the divinity. That primeval perspective puts the emphasis on the noblest and most transcendental aspects of the communicative function of wine, with scarce interest for its intrinsic characteristics, given that wine is wine and provided that it is obtained according the proper practice: *ex genimine vitis* - from the fruit of the vine.

At the beginning of the contemporary times, the discovery of the homo oeconomicus, made by the merit of the anglo-saxon empiricism, overcomes the difficulty of explaining the whole of the human conducts which would imply providing the most intimate and hidden motivations. It stylizes the human behaviours only with respect to some of the unescapable motivations - the economic ones - which rule the human intercourse, and entitle us to be satisfied with a more reductive explanation of human behaviours but more discreet and less pretentious.

Also in this new perspective wine, or better, the wine commodity does not loose its mediation function which is, on the contrary, specially amplified within the context of the local/global economic systems. It is not a case that the first attempts of systematizing the concept of wealth produced and distributed - the *Produit Net* in the *Tableau Economique* by François Quesnay, leader and inspirer of the *Phisocrats* - occur in the same cultural milieu where a vast communication deal was taking place. Its aim was the promotion of the quality wine commodity and was operated by the wine producers of the French region of Champagne with respect to the French court. Both operations were patronized by the *Marquise de Pompadour*, patroness of the arts and sciences.

In the beginning, in the era of *Dom Pérignon*, the in-bottle re-fermentation, that gives sparkling wine, was an immense problem for winemakers, as we have been taught in our meeting in Reims / Epernay , some decades ago. In cool autumns, fermentation sometimes didn't succeed in converting all fermentable sugars into alcohol. If the wine was bottled in this state, it became a real time bomb. Since in warm spring, dormant yeast roused and began generating carbon dioxide that would cause the explosion of the bottle. This fact could start a chain

reaction: nearby bottles, which were also under pressure, would break from the shock of the first breakage, and so on, which put under risk that year's production. The question was, then, how to avoid re-fermentation.

In a way probably not completely aware of the long term exceptional results, the attempt was made - which turned out to be extraordinarily successful only in the lapse of two centuries - of transforming a fermentation problem into a national, at first, and then world-wide booming business. This was done through a watchful protection of the denomination, the construction of a solid reputation, the careful respect and memory of the procedures for obtaining the product, and through, we would say to day, convenient communication policies.

On the other hand the Ricardo's corn model takes its notion of economic surplus from the Physiocrats. A consistent value theory has, then, allowed to consider the *Produit Net* in value terms rather than in physical terms, leading to the idea of Value Added, the fundamental aggregate of modern economic theory and practice. This broadening of the concept of production allows for the introduction, within the commodities produced, of immaterial products: the services, whose role is increasingly relevant in the production process of our days. This is the case of communication within the production process of the wine commodity, whose role is becoming strategic in the era of globalization.

To day wine, but we should say the quality wine commodity, must enjoy of those features that characterize a great share of commodities through which many countries hope to compete on the global market. The quality wine commodity needs to incorporate distinguishing traits that are more and more immaterial related not only to its intrinsic quality but also to those evocated by production methodologies and by the cultural background where it originates.

The sharp and clear stability of its features comes from the concentration of a great historical tradition on a geographically limited territory, on the part of a human group limited in its members. In many cases the local identity is prevailing with respect to the firm image. For these reasons the increasing percentage share of the value that composes the commodity value is made up by intermediate immaterial goods, for what regards the services employed in the production, and for what refers to value added, by the higher incomes that can be distributed for the reason that the commodity is allocated on the global market.

However the result is not warranted once and for all: new producers and new regions emerge ready and qualified to compete both on the intrinsic quality and on the image. This fact stresses the relevance of strategic phenomena, sometimes apparently contradictory, as for example, collaboration among competing producers, tipicality, communication strategy, evaluation system and market, whose meaning has to be investigated through analysis and comparison with the daily practice.

The double topic wine and economics, in the light of a further twin issue which is communication and globalization, make up a subject matter capable of inspiring the discussion on the results attained and able to stimulate the emergence of new ideas and strategies. On these bases Enometrica wants to provide a symposium on the art of wine-making, tradition, communication and diffusion, sure that its inspiring subjects, wine and economics - so strictly tied to contemporary history and culture - will greatly profit of the emerging contributions of successful new countries.

Maurizio Ciaschini