



SANGIOVESE

THE DECEIT OF THE ORIGINS

The origins of a vine are as much distant in time and mysterious for places, as more numerous are its synonyms. Few vines have so many synonyms, right or wrong they may be, like Sangiovese. Nevertheless, the first who chose it and the place where this event happened are unknown.

The first documented mention of Sangiovese was in the 1590 writings of Giovanvettore Soderini. Only after the first half of the 19th century, with the birth of ampelography and the use of the post-phylloxera reconstruction, there were several more descriptions and documented mentions; however, there were a lot of synonyms that caused confusion as regards the identification and next the characterization of the vine. To understand the origins of Sangiovese we must use the metonymy, a figure of speech that allows the identification of the vine to the divinity. Have you ever looked for Sagittarius traces in the sky? Certainly you focused your attention on the figures made by the stars, half man and half horse, those of Centaur and of Sagittarius. Jupiter, the biggest of our planets, rules Sagittarius, the sign of justice that gives the name to Sangiovese, a double vine, looking mild and farming but actually grouchy and snobbish.

The vagueness of its origin, a dispute between the inhabitants of the Romagna and the Tuscans, confers the vine a mythical aura and its name refers to the blood and its symbols, like the sacrifice of the divinity: Sangiovese as the blood of Jove.

Other Tuscan and Corsican sources attribute its origin to "Sangiovannese" (Saint John) for its quite early time of ripeness. The attribution of the vine to the Etruscan culture, made by the Idealist authors in the past, has recently been called into question after the results of DNA researches. The analysis of the genetic kinship of Sangiovese have highlighted that the majority of wine grapes that contributed to its pedigree are of Calabrian and Sicilian origins and they are witnesses of the most ancient vinicultures of Magna Graecia, the founding fathers of our wine culture.

They are Frappato, Gaglioppo, Nerello Mascalese, Perricone, Greco Nero, Catarratto and Ciliegiolo even if other vines have contributed to this genetic diversification.

When did this vine first appear in Tuscany and why did it leave Calabria and Sicily? The first description in Tuscany, dating around the end of 1500, maybe considered a relevant evidence.

After Carlo V, the kingdom of Naples and Sicily was founded under the Spanish dominion and a period of continuous religious wars started. The need for money to finance these wars, obliged the Bourbons of Austriato borrow money from the Tuscan bankers, primarily the Medici, pawning wide lands that were controlled by the Tuscan farmers, so the moving of Sangiovese to Tuscany can be attributed to them.

The word autochthonous has gradually lost its meaning since the vineyards are the result of an intense and ancient variated circulation and so the word can be referred no more to a place but to a time, in which the vine reveals its best qualities through its producing features.

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